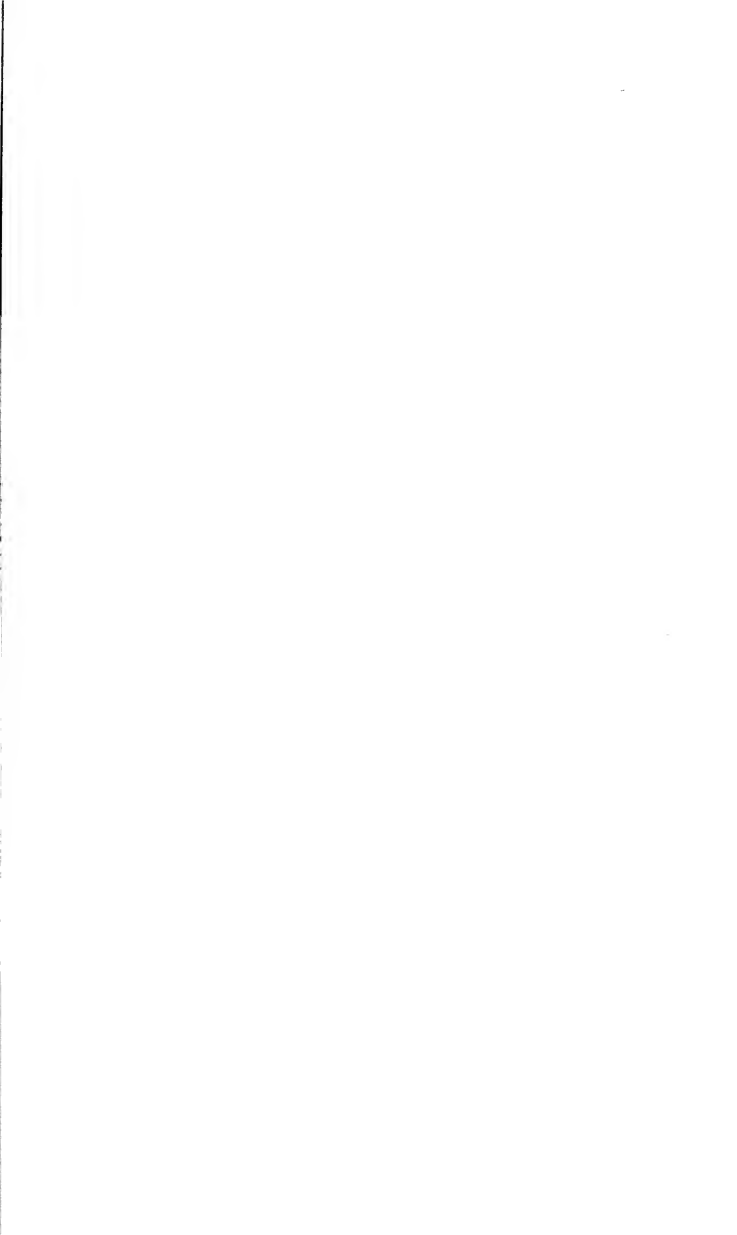


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WEBSTER ON HIS FARM.

LIFE OF

DANIEL WEBSTER



PHILADELPHIA:

Lindsay & Blakiston



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D A N I E L W E B S T E R ,

THE STATESMAN AND THE PATRIOT.

C O N T A I N I N G

N U M E R O U S A N E C D O T E S .

With Illustrations.



PHILADELPHIA:
L I N D S A Y & B L A K I S T O N .

1853.

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1853

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P R E F A C E.



THIS Life of Daniel Webster is written for the young; and for that reason, as is elsewhere said, the events of his boyhood and college-days are dwelt upon with more minuteness than those of his after life.

For a man occupying the high place which he held in the eye of the nation, his private character was little known. He had not the winning address which draws the great multitude. People did not call him by the familiar terms with which popular idols are designated. He was not covetous of parade and personal attentions. He never courted the fashion, or appealed to the prejudice, of the hour. He never threw himself upon the

wave of popular feeling, to be borne on to distinction. He was not calculated to win

“Golden opinions from all sorts of people.”

He was ambitious. But his was not that ambition which desires to make an impression, and thus obtain preferment and honor. It was that proud ambition which knew his own strength, and waited for the world to recognize it. The greatest “special pleader” of his day, he was no “special pleader” for himself; for he felt his own superiority, and his own integrity of motive. He could take care of his own honor; and disdained to explain, to excuse, or to apologize, even when his friends and constituents saw things from a different point of view than that on which he stood.

He waited for the hour when his own countrymen should do him justice. The hour has come; but now —

“Him nor carketh care nor slander,
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth his enshrouded form.”

The voice of eulogy falls unheeded on "the dull cold ear of death."

It is due to ourselves that, as a nation, we should know the man who, more than any of his contemporaries, raised this people in the esteem of the world. It is proper that our young men should know him. If they would learn the history of their land, they must read his life, and study his writings. This little volume is intended to place him before them in those aspects of his life and character which, in works of higher merit, may be overlooked.

Free use is made of the many biographical, and other notices, which have already been published; and to the respective authors we here make our acknowledgments.



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THE LIFE

OF

DANIEL WEBSTER.

CHAPTER I.

Opening Remarks — The Webster Family — Birth of Daniel — His Parents, Brothers and Sisters — His Early Years — Remarks of Mr. Hillard — Mr. Webster's Reference to his Birth-place — Daniel Webster's first Teachers — Mr. Thomas Chase — Mr. James Tappan — Letters of Mr. Webster to Mr. Tappan — The old School-master's Recollections of his Pupils — Mr. Webster's generous Presents to his old Instructor — Mr. William Hoyt — Daniel Webster's first Copy of the Constitution of the United States — Long Walks to School — Daniel Webster's Father a natural Elocutionist — The Son taught by the Father — Little Dan's Reading — Anecdote.

IN a republican country, the circumstances of birth confer no claim to honor or distinction; and the descendants of great men and public benefactors are entitled to no consideration on account of their parentage, except so far as the son is per-

mitted to share in the sentiment of gratitude due to the father. And, when that son is worthy, and honors the memory of his parents by perpetuating their virtues, he is entitled to an honest pride in his ancestry. This is a natural feeling, which no political theory can eradicate. But when, on the other hand, the unworthy son of a worthy parent degrades his family, he meets with a contempt proportioned to the esteem in which his ancestors were held. This is natural justice, which no law of primogeniture can wholly avert, and which, in the absence of such laws, is always meted out to the transgressor.

Still, in a biographical work, it is a proper compliment to the subject to notice his ancestry; and, furthermore, it is useful as exhibiting the circumstances and associations which combined, in early life, to form the characters of those who are worthy of such commemoration. The family to which Daniel Webster belonged was of Scottish origin, but the descendants had resided so long in England, previous to their emigration to America, that all distinct traces of this extraction were lost. Thomas Webster emigrated from Norfolk, England, in 1656, sixteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth. He settled at Hampton,

on the sea-coast of New Hampshire. From him descended two of the most remarkable men this country has produced; Dr. Noah Webster, the author of the American Dictionary of the English language, and Daniel Webster, the distinguished statesman, whose life we are about to hold up as an example for the emulation of his young countrymen.

Daniel Webster, of the fourth generation from the original settler, Thomas, was born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, on the 18th of January, 1782. His father, Ebenezer Webster, was a soldier in two wars—serving as a member of a volunteer corps in the French war, which closed in 1763, and afterward employing his military experience in the protracted struggle which established the freedom of the United States of America. As commander of a volunteer company he served under Stark in the memorable battle of Bennington, and performed a most important part in that engagement. He was present at the battle of White Plains, and was distinguished as a popular and most efficient commander. He was of athletic stature and commanding appearance; having been trained in that border school of hardship and endurance, which gave to the founders of this

Republic the physical development which seconded their mental and moral strength.

The township of Salisbury was mostly settled by retired soldiers of the French war. Ebenezer Webster being one of the original grantees, and his tract lying in the northerly part of the township, his son used to say of him, that, for many years, the smoke of his cabin ascended nearer the North Star than that of any other of his Majesty's New England subjects. To the north, as far as the boundaries of Canada, all was a wilderness. Ebenezer Webster settled on this tract in 1764, and, very soon after, his wife died, leaving five children. This family consisted of three sons and two daughters. Mr. Webster then married Abigail Eastman, of Salisbury, and by this second union became the father of three daughters, and two sons, Ezekiel and Daniel. Of the sons by the first marriage one died young, and the other removed to Canada. The third son, Joseph, will be noticed in these pages in connection with our subject. Ezekiel, the only brother of Daniel by the same mother, lived to share the hopes and almost the triumphs of the rising statesman; but he died twenty years before Daniel, all the others, with the exception of one sister, having preceded him to

the grave. That sister, the youngest of the family, died in 1831.

Thus, being the ninth child in a family of ten, we may readily infer that his father, a backwoods settler, had not sufficient means to afford any great educational advantages to Daniel Webster. But he received the tuition of circumstances—adverse circumstances—a hard discipline to undergo, but productive of solid and enduring results. An eloquent writer, in noticing the early years of the distinguished statesman, says: “Daniel Webster was fortunate in the outward circumstances of his birth and breeding. He came from that class in society whence almost all the great men of America have come,—the two Adamses, Washington, Hancock, Jackson, Jefferson, Clay, and almost every living notable of our time. Our Hercules was also cradled on the ground. He had small opportunities for academical education. The schoolmaster was ‘abroad’ in New Hampshire; he was seldom at home in Salisbury. Only two or three months in a year was there a school, and that was two or three miles off. Thither went Daniel Webster, a brave, bright boy, ‘the father of the man.’ The school-house of New England is the cradle of her greatness.”

Hon. George S. Hilliard spoke as follows, upon the occasion of the funeral obsequies of Daniel Webster, in Boston, concerning the surroundings and associations of the lad, whose fame as a man is now spread throughout all the world: "He was fortunate in the accident, or rather the Providence of his birth. His father was a man of uncommon strength of mind and worth of character, who had served his country faithfully in trying times, and earned, in a high degree, the respect and confidence of his neighbors;—a man of large and loving heart, whose efforts and sacrifices for his children were repaid by them with most affectionate veneration. The energy and good sense of Daniel's mother exerted a strong influence upon the minds and characters of her children. He was born to the discipline of poverty, but a poverty such as braces and stimulates, not such as crushes and paralyzes. The region in which his boyhood was passed was new and wild, books were not easy to be had, schools were only an occasional privilege, and intercourse with the more settled parts of the country was difficult and rare.

"But the scarcity of mental food and mental excitement had its advantages, and his training was good, however imperfect his teaching might

have been. His labors upon the farm helped to form that vigorous constitution, which enabled him to sustain the immense pressure of cares and duties laid upon him in after years. Such books as he could procure were read with heartfelt avidity, and all the powers of his mind devoted to their study. The conversation of a household, presided over by a strong-minded father, and a sensible, loving mother, helped to train the faculties of the younger members of the family. Nor were their winter evenings wanting in topics which had a fresher interest than any which books could furnish. There were stirring tales of the Revolutionary struggle and the old French war, in both of which his father had taken a part, with many traditions of the hardships and perils of border life, and harrowing narratives of Indian captivity, all of which sunk deep into the heart of the impressible boy.

“The ample page of Nature was ever before his eyes, not beautiful nor picturesque, but stern, wild, and solitary, covered with a primeval forest, in winter swept over by tremendous storms, but in summer putting on a short-lived grace, and in autumn glowing with an imperial pomp of coloring. In the deep, lonely woods, by the rushing streams,

under the frosty stars of winter, the musing boy gathered food for his growing mind. There, to him, the mighty mother unveiled her awful face; and there, we may be sure that the dauntless child stretched forth his hands and smiled. We feel a pensive pleasure in calling up the image of this slender, dark-browed, bright-eyed youth, going forth in the morning of life to sow the seed of future years. A loving brother, and a loving and dutiful son, he is cheerful under privation, and patient under restraint. Whatever work he finds to do, whether with the brain or the hand, he does it with all his might. He opens his mind to every ray of knowledge which breaks in upon him. Every step is a progress, and every blow removes an obstacle. Onward, ever onward he moves; borne against the wind and against the tide by a self-derived and self-sustained impulse. He makes friends, awakens interest, inspires hopes. Thus, with these good angels about him, he passes from boyhood to youth, and from youth to early manhood. The school and the college have given him what they had to give; an excellent professional training has been secured; and now, with a vigorous frame and a spirit patient of labor, with manly self-reliance, and a heart glowing with

generous ambition and warm affections, the man, Daniel Webster, stepped forth into the arena of life."

At the time when Daniel Webster was born, nearly twenty years after his father's settlement in Salisbury, the original cabin had given way to a more substantial house. That house has also been removed, and the traces of the cellar alone indicate the spot where it stood. Near the site is an old well, excavated by his father; and the premises are sheltered by a giant elm, planted a year or two before the birth of Daniel. Under this elm Mr. Webster, when a man, and engaged in the labors of his profession, or the cares of State, always sat at least once in a year, and drank of the waters of the well which his father had dug. The site of the old house and of the log-cabin, the fruit and other trees which his father and grandfather had planted, and the many objects which recalled the memory of his childhood, were to him sources of inspiration. His feelings are well expressed in a speech which he made in 1840, when General Harrison was a candidate for President of the United States. He said: "It is only shallow-minded pretenders who either make distinguished origin matter of personal merit, or

obscure origin matter of personal reproach. Taunt and scoffing at the humble condition of early life affect nobody, in this country, but those who are foolish enough to indulge in them; and they are generally sufficiently punished by public rebuke. A man who is not ashamed of himself need not be ashamed of his early condition.

“It did not happen to me to be born in a log-cabin, but my elder brothers and sisters were born in a log-cabin, raised amid the snow-drifts of New Hampshire, at a period so early, that when the smoke first rose from its chimney and curled over the frozen hills, there was no similar evidence of a white man’s habitation between it and the settlements on the rivers of Canada. Its remains still exist. I make to it an annual visit. I carry my children to it, to teach them the hardships endured by the generations which have gone before them. I love to dwell on the tender recollections, the kindred ties, the early affections, and the touching narrations and incidents which mingle with all I know of this primitive family abode. I weep to think that none of those who inhabited it are now among the living; and if ever I am ashamed of it, or if ever I fail in affectionate veneration for him who raised it, and defended it against savage

violence and destruction, cherished all the domestic virtues beneath its roof, and, through the fire and blood of a seven years' revolutionary war, shrunk from no danger, no toil, no sacrifice to serve his country, and to raise his children to a better condition than his own, may my name, and the name of my posterity, be blotted forever from the memory of mankind."

There were other reminiscences connected with a log building, which were dear to Mr. Webster, and are interesting to those who read his life. The first school-house which young Daniel ever entered was built of logs, and in this humble building the boy studied the rudiments of the education which, by the aid of natural talents, seconded by application, made him the great jurist and statesman. Daniel's first school experience was not in a public, but in a "subscription school," opened at the request, and under the patronage of Colonel Webster, his father, and other residents in the vicinity. The teacher was Mr. Thomas Chase. Daniel Webster had, however, before entering this school, the privilege of the best of teachers, his mother. She taught him to read, and the first book which he remembered reading was the Bible. The mother of Ezekiel and Daniel Webster had a

mother's ambition for her children, and a strong mind and capacity to direct them. As Daniel was only about four years old when he entered this school, much could not have been required of the teacher. Daniel appears to have enjoyed advantages superior to those of his brothers. Something of this was obtained by his early delicate appearance, and something, no doubt, by the fact that he was the youngest of nine children. His brother Joseph used to say of him, in a good-humored way, that "Dan was sent to school, that he might know as much as the other boys!"

Of Daniel's other teachers in his infancy we happen to possess some very pleasant memorials. One of them, James Tappan, died at Gloucester, Massachusetts, since the death of Mr. Webster. In 1851 he reminded his distinguished pupil that he was still alive, and received from him the following letter:

"WASHINGTON, *Feb. 26th*, 1851.

"MASTER TAPPAN,—I thank you for your letter, and am rejoiced to hear that you are still among the living. I remember you perfectly well as a teacher of my infant years. I suppose my mother must have taught me to read very early, as I have never been able to recollect the time when I could

not read the Bible. I think Master Chase was my earliest schoolmaster, probably when I was three or four years old. Then came Master Tappan. You boarded at our house, and sometimes I think in the family of Mr. Benjamin Sanborn, our neighbor, the lame man. Most of those whom you knew in New Salisbury have gone to their graves. Mr. John Sanborn, the son of Benjamin, is yet living, and is about your age. Mr. John Colby, who married my eldest sister, Susannah, is also living. On the North road is Mr. Benjamin Pettingill. I think of none else among the living whom you would possibly remember. You have, indeed, lived a checkered life. I hope you have been able to bear prosperity with meekness, and adversity with patience. These things are all ordered for us, far better than we can order them for ourselves. We may pray for our daily bread; we may pray for the forgiveness of sins; we may pray to be kept from temptation, and that the kingdom of God may come, in us, and in all men, and his will everywhere be done. Beyond this, we hardly know for what good to supplicate the Divine Mercy. Our Heavenly Father knoweth what we have need of better than we do ourselves, and we are sure that

his eye and his loving kindness are upon us and around us, every moment. I thank you again, my good old schoolmaster, for your kind letter, which has awakened many sleeping recollections; and with all good wishes,

“I remain your friend and pupil,

“DANIEL WEBSTER.”

A correspondent of the Boston Transcript, who met Mr. Tappan at Gloucester in the summer of 1852, gives us the schoolmaster's reminiscences of his pupil. “Master Tappan” at that time was in his eighty-sixth year, somewhat infirm, but with his intellectual faculties bright and vivid, especially on the subject of his old pupil, whom he esteemed the foremost man of his time, and in whose fame he took a justifiable and natural pride. “Daniel was always the brightest boy in the school,” said Master Tappan, “and Ezekiel the next; but Daniel was much quicker at his studies than his brother. He would learn more in five minutes than any other boy would in five hours. One Saturday, I remember, I held up a handsome new knife to the scholars, and said the boy who would commit to memory the greatest number of verses in the Bible, by Monday morning, should

have it. Many of the boys did well; but when it came to Daniel's turn to recite, I found that he had committed so much that, after hearing him repeat some sixty or seventy verses, I was obliged to give up, he telling me that there were several chapters yet that he had learned. Daniel got that jack-knife. Ah! Sir, he was remarkable, even as a boy; and I told his father he would do God's work injustice, if he did not send both Daniel and Ezekiel to college. The old man said he could not well afford it; but I told him he must, and he finally did. And didn't they both justify my good opinion?"

The paper containing this notice of "Master Tappan" was shown to Mr. Webster, and he instantly wrote and despatched the following letter to the old gentleman:—

"BOSTON, *July 20th*, 1852.

"MASTER TAPPAN,—I learn with much pleasure, through the public press, that you still continue to enjoy life, with mental faculties bright and vivid, although you have arrived at a very advanced age, and are somewhat infirm. I came to-day from the very spot in which you taught me; and to me a most delightful spot it is. The

river and the hills are as beautiful as ever, but the graves of my father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and early friends, gave it to me something of the appearance of a city of the dead. But let me not repine. You have lived long, and my life is already not short, and we have both much to be thankful for. Two or three persons are yet living, who, like myself, were brought up *sub tua ferula*. They remember 'Master Tappan.' And now, my good old master, receive a renewed tribute of affectionate regard from your grateful pupil, with his wishes and prayers for your happiness in all that remains to you in this life, and, more especially, for your participation hereafter in the durable riches of righteousness.

“DANIEL WEBSTER.”

The “renewed tribute of affectionate regard” spoken of in the above letter was an enclosure of twenty dollars. In the first letter, sent the year before, Mr. Webster enclosed fifty. It is pleasant to record these evidences of the affection of the man for the teacher of his childhood; and it is useful also to notice what appreciation the aged statesman had of the services of those who introduced him to the first humble acquisitions in the course

of education which made him great. We have got another memorial of Mr. Webster's early teachers, preserved by his private secretary, Mr. Lanman. It is a memorandum of his conversation respecting Mr. Hoyt.

“Mr. William Hoyt was, for many years, teacher of our county school in Salisbury: I do not call it village school, because there was at that time no village; and boys came to school in the winter, the only season in which schools were usually open, from distances of several miles, wading through the snow, or running upon its crust, with their curly hair often whitened with frost from their own breaths. I knew William Hoyt well, and every truant knew him. He was an austere man, but a good teacher of children. He had been a printer in Newburyport, wrote a very fair and excellent hand, was a good reader, and could teach boys, that which so few masters can or will do, to read well themselves. Beyond this, and a very slight knowledge of grammar, his attainments did not extend. He had brought with him into the town a little property, which he took very good care of. He rather loved money; of all the pronouns preferring the possessive; he also kept a little shop for the sale of various commo-

dities. I do not know how old I was, but I remember having gone into his shop one day, and bought a small cotton pocket-handkerchief, with a Constitution of the United States printed on its two sides; from this I just learned either that there was a Constitution, or that there were United States. I remember to have read it, and have known more or less of it ever since. William Hoyt and his wife lie buried in the grave-yard on my farm, near the graves of my own family. He left no children. I suppose that this little handkerchief was purchased about the time that I was eight years old, as I remember listening to the conversation of my father and Mr. Thompson upon political events which happened in the year 1790."

The Constitution of the United States was only ratified in 1789 by the several States, and had hardly, at the time when Daniel Webster commenced the study of it, gone into operation. The purchase exhausted his juvenile purse; and the afternoon and evening of the day on which it came into his possession were spent in poring over and spelling out its provisions. Little could his parents then have dreamed that the thoughtful boy was entering upon the course of study, at

eight years of age, which should qualify him for the title of "Expounder of the Constitution."

There were three school-houses in the township of Salisbury, which were situated several miles apart. The first was near Colonel Webster's residence; the next at perhaps three miles' distance; the third in the extreme part of the township. The teacher divided his time between the three. When the school was in the centre school-house, young Daniel went in the morning, taking his dinner, and returned at night; and when the schoolmaster was in the western part of his circuit, the young student boarded near the school-house, going on foot on Monday morning, and returning on Saturday evening. Such disadvantages, as we should now consider them, were, by the youth of that day, considered to be great opportunities.

We have mentioned Daniel's indebtedness to his mother for early instruction. It is due to his father also to state that his influence and example did much for his child. Colonel Webster was a man of strong natural talents, and is said to have had an intuitive knowledge of the principles of elocution. His voice was loud, clear, and musical, and his reading and speaking were of the best

school of natural oratory. The books he delighted to read aloud for the gratification of his family and others, were the Bible, Shakspeare, and Pope's Essay on Man. To his occupation as a farmer he added that of an innkeeper; a calling which, in those days, was held in high respect. The Governor of Vermont at that time united the vocations of Governor and landlord. General Putnam and several others of the Revolutionary officers were innkeepers. And when Colonel Webster, in 1791, was appointed an Associate Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, he still continued, for some years, to entertain travellers—the gentlemanly host—happy to receive guests, who, in his pleasant society, forgot that they were not visitors on purely friendly terms. Colonel Webster excelled in conversation; and his knowledge of the Constitution and laws was such as to command respect for his opinions. Of course, a judge not educated to the law was not expected to make decisions on mere technical points; but the union of practical business men and farmers, with lawyers, upon the bench, has been found to have an exceedingly good influence in County Courts in rural districts; and, in former years,

when professional men were rare, was a necessary expedient.

With an inherited taste and capacity for elocution, and the lessons of his father added to those of his teachers, Daniel was the pet of the travellers who stopped at the inn. As they drew near the house, they thought of the young orator; and when they stopped, and the future statesman, then a dark-looking boy, had watered their horses, or assisted them in helping themselves, the teamsters were wont to say, "Now, let us go in, and hear little Dan read a Psalm." What primitive days were these! And how different a race of men were those old backwoodsmen from their descendants, who claim to have improved under the benefit of modern advantages! No doubt we have gained much, but in the changes of time we have lost something too. The teamsters who could listen with delight to a Psalm of David, and the tavern in which a boy could be educated in such tastes, belonged to a more simple, certainly a not less virtuous era than the present.

A few years ago, when Daniel Webster, the Senator of the United States, visited the West, a citizen of one of the new States, who had immi-

grated from New Hampshire, met him and remembered him.

“Is this,” he asked, “the son of Col. Webster?”

“It is, indeed,” was the reply.

“What,” repeated the man, “is this the little black Dan who used to water the horses?”

“Yes,” rejoined the great Daniel Webster, “it is the little black Dan who used to water the horses.”

He was proud of his history. “If a man finds the way alone,” says the writer from whom we derive this anecdote, “should he not be proud of having found the way?”

CHAPTER II.

Daniel Webster's Habits as a Boy — His Employments and Industry — The Saw-mill — Reading while the Saw moved — The Bible, Shakspeare, and Pope's Essay on Man — Watt's Hymns — Too much Light — The Social Library — Chevy Chase — Webster's manner of Reading — Anecdotes of his Boyhood — Daniel as an Office Boy — Latin Grammar — His first intimation that he was to go to School — The Journey to Exeter — His Examination by the Principal of Phillips Academy — His Diffidence and Application — Daniel's marked Success — Returns to Salisbury, and commences as Schoolmaster — He is placed with Dr. Wood, of Boscawen — His Emotion upon hearing that he was to be sent to College.

THE death of no other man in America has called out more anecdotes and traditions, than were thrown to the world upon the demise of Daniel Webster. As remarked in the preceding chapter, our desire is to furnish the youth of America with an account of those traits of his character, which all would do well to emulate. In doing this, we make free use of whatever has fallen under our notice, endeavoring to separate the true from the false, and to correct such erro-

neous statements as have gained currency, through the desire of all to contribute something to the common stock of anecdotes.

The writer of a very interesting article upon Webster, in Putnam's Monthly Magazine, opens by stating that he had visited the place of his nativity, and conversed with the friends of his boyhood, corresponded with most of his surviving classmates and college friends, and examined hundreds of his letters. As the result of his investigations the writer has presented us with many important facts and conclusions, of which free use is made in this volume, with this general acknowledgment.

“Daniel Webster performed the ordinary services of a boy upon his father's farm. His taste for agriculture, and his fondness for rural life grew directly out of the associations of his childhood. Imagine to yourself a slender, black-eyed boy, with serious mien and raven locks, leading the traveller's horse to water when he alighted at his father's inn; driving the cows to pasture at early dawn, and returning with them at the gray of evening; riding the horse, to harrow between the rows of corn at weeding-time, and following the mowers with a wooden spreader in haying-time;



YOUNG DANIEL IN THE SAW MILL.

and you have a true idea of the lad and of his duties. In dress, in the means of social and intellectual culture, his condition was far below that of the sons of farmers and mechanics of the present day. Many anecdotes have been published, of his incapacity for manual labor, or of his aversion to it. The testimony of his early companions and neighbors contradicts, in general and in particulars, all stories of his idleness.

“He was an industrious boy. He labored to the extent of his strength. He was the youngest son, and, perhaps, on that account received some indulgences. Men are now living who labored with him, in the field and in the mill—who shared his toils and his sports. They affirm that he always ‘worked well and played fair.’ Boys in those days were usually trained to hard service. I have heard Mr. Webster say that he had charge of his father’s saw-mill, and was accustomed to tread back the log-carriage, ‘when he was not heavier than a robin.’ An old schoolmate of his told me that the mill was owned in shares, by several of the neighbors, who used it in turn. Boys were put into the mill to tend it, when it required the weight of two of them to turn back the ‘rag-wheel’ and bring the log-carriage to its

place to commence a new cut. He informed me that he had labored many a day with Daniel Webster, in this old mill, and that his companion was ever ready to do his part of the service. The same boy, Daniel, was accustomed to drive the team into the woods, where his elder brother, Ezekiel, cut the logs and assisted in loading them."

This mill has been, of late years, regarded as almost classic ground. Mr. Webster, who was notable for his attachment to the scenes of his youth, conducted his guests over the places marked in his memory, with honest pride. And the residents near these localities, admiring the man who in his fame never forgot "the rock whence he was hewn," gave to the haunts of the "little black Dan" a fame and a consequence which is usually reserved to be conferred by posterity. General S. P. Lyman, for many years the friend and intimate of Daniel Webster, gives the following description of the place, and notice of its memoirs:

"In the bed of a little brook, near where Daniel Webster was born, are the remains of a rude mill which his father built more than sixty years ago. The place is a dark glen, and was then surrounded by a majestic forest, which covered the neighboring hills. To that mill, Daniel Webster, though a

small boy, went frequently to assist his father. He was apt in learning anything useful, and soon became so expert in doing everything required, that his services as an assistant were valuable. But the time spent in manual labor was not mis-spent as regarded mental progress. After 'setting the saw' and 'hoisting the gate,' and while the saw was passing through the log, which usually occupied from ten to fifteen minutes for each board, Daniel was reading attentively some book, which he was permitted to take from the house. He had a passion, thus early, for reading history and biography."

There, surrounded by forests, in the midst of the great noise which such a mill makes, and this too without materially neglecting his task, he made himself familiar with the most remarkable events in history, and with the lives and characters of those who have furnished materials for its pages. What he read there he never forgot. So tenacious was his memory, that he could recite long passages from books which he read there, and scarcely looked at afterward. The solitude of the scene, the absence of everything to divert his attention, the simplicity of his occupation, the thoughtful and taciturn manner of his father, all

avored the process of transplanting every idea found in these books to his own fresh, fruitful and vigorous mind.

Books were, however, hard to find in that sequestered place; and the young student, voracious of knowledge, was forced to read over and over again the old, because he could not obtain new. The Bible, Shakspeare, and Pope's *Essay on Man*, we have already mentioned as favorites with his father. With the first-named, the first of all books, he was very familiar, his early taste for poetry leading him to delight in studying the poetical portions of the inspired volume. The traces of this familiarity with Scripture, common to most men of enlarged minds, may be found continually in his writings and speeches. Pope's *Essay on Man* he committed to memory on the very day it fell into his hands; before he was fourteen years of age. When once asked why he committed that poem at so early an age, he replied, "I had nothing else to learn."

Since at twelve he "had nothing else to learn," we may presume that he had before that committed to memory Watts' Hymns and the metrical version of the Psalms. He was accustomed to say, in his later years, that he could repeat any

stanza of Watts, of which he heard the first line ; so closely did what he had conned in the forest adhere to him. He needed to read poetry but twice to be able to repeat it. While such a dearth of books existed, he conned his father's collection over and over. Newspapers were not then flying like winged seeds of good and evil all over the land, and even a new almanac was a treasure. Ezekiel and Daniel had frequent disputes, in their limited world of literature and knowledge ; and, on one occasion, after going to bed, a question arose as to something in the new almanac. They rose and struck a light to settle the dispute, and, in their eagerness and carelessness, set their bed on fire. On being questioned the next morning as to the cause of the accident, Daniel answered, "that they were in pursuit of light, and got too much of it."

Books soon became more abundant. Some of the biographers of Webster state that he enjoyed access to a "Circulating Library." But the collections of ephemeral and trifling literature known under the name of circulating libraries, and collected with the purpose of attracting the thoughtless, and ministering to the folly of readers for mere amusement, were at that time almost un-

known; and we presume that, to this day, there never has been such a collection within twenty miles of Daniel Webster's birth-place. The library to which he had access was what is called a "Social Library," collected through the exertions of his father, the clergyman, and Thomas W. Thompson, Esq., a lawyer. The Social Library was divided into shares, at a fixed price, which every member of the company paid upon entrance, each share entitling the holder to certain privileges, and being subject to an annual assessment, for the purpose of increasing the number of volumes. Purchases were made by careful committees; and, although we know nothing of Salisbury Social Library, we venture to say, from our knowledge of other similar institutions, that young Daniel had a better opportunity for mental improvement in this collection, "*fit though few*," than the present generation of youth, whose spending-money will furnish them with publications too cheap to be good; and too much like locust swarms in number to pass under the censorship of their elders.

One of Mr. Webster's eulogists has remarked of him, that "he had read much, but not many books. With the best English writers he was en-

tirely familiar, and took great pleasure in reading them, and discussing their merits." Among the books in the library at Salisbury was the *Spectator*. Of this work he was very fond; and, in after life he related a circumstance, which shows how predominant was his love of poetry. He said he remembered turning over the leaves of Addison's criticism of Chevy Chase, to pick out and read connectedly the verses which Addison had quoted. For recreation and amusement his preference settled upon biography and travels; and this may have been a part of his "social library" education. The number of such books formed a much larger portion of the current publications at the end of the last century than at present; the novel had not obtained its present unjust proportion in the province of belles-lettres. General Lyman describes his manner of reading ten years before his death, which indicates the habit formed, when to obtain a new book was an event of which he was disposed to make the most. He first went over the index, and apparently fixed the frame-work of it in his mind; then he studied with equal earnestness the synopsis of each chapter. Then he looked at the length of the chapter. Then, before he began to read it, he took an accurate

survey of its parts. Then he read it; passing rapidly over what was common-place, and dwelling only on what was original and worthy of note.

It is not to be supposed that Daniel Webster, whose playfulness of character remained through his life, was different from other boys in his fondness for amusement in his childhood. And, although he "played fair and worked well," he had a boy's choice for play above work, which he exhibited upon occasion. His surviving school-mates deny, however, that his fondness for hunting and fishing caused him to play the truant from school. They say that he was always present, when the school was open, and always in advance of his associates. In the laborious occupations of the farm there were, of course, some things which he could not do. He did not remain at home long enough to learn to mow. An anecdote in reference to this has long been stereotyped, and current in the papers. His awkward handling of the scythe induced several attempts on the part of his father to "hang" the instrument better—that is, to affix it to the handle. But Daniel could not be brought to like the "hang," and his father told him at last that he must suit himself. Hanging it at once upon a tree, he said, "There,

father, that's the hang to suit me." To mow requires a strength and dexterity which are seldom possessed by boys of ten or twelve years of age. Daniel's wit helped him out on this as well as other occasions. The two boys, Ezekiel and Daniel were once left a task to perform, in the absence of their father. His return showed the work still undone.

"What *have* you been doing?" the father asked of the elder boy, in a tone of natural vexation.

"Nothing, Sir," Ezekiel was obliged to confess, with the evidence before him.

"And you, Daniel," said the father, "what have you been doing?"

"Helping Zeke, Sir."

The force of logic usually owes much to the inclinations of the person who is to be convinced. Colonel Webster required that his sons should go regularly to church on every Sunday, though the distance was about four miles; and Daniel complained of the hardship of so long a walk. To this the father answered:

"I see Deacon True's boys there every Sunday morning, and I never heard of their complaining."

"Oh, yes, Sir," answered Daniel, "but the Dea-

con's boys live half way there, and have only half as far to walk."

"Well," said his father, "you may dress yourself early, and run up to Deacon True's, and then you will have no farther to go than they."

This was conclusive. To visit Deacon True's boys was never a hardship, and Daniel, thereafter, was always ready to go early, and walk to church with them.

In 1795, when Daniel was in his fourteenth year, Mr. Thompson, the lawyer in Salisbury, induced him to stay in his office during his necessary absence, to answer the questions of clients and others. His intelligence and his aptitude for learning had undoubtedly procured him this preference; and, trifling as the circumstance then appeared, it combined with others to rule his life. Many lads, in such a place, would have nursed habits of idleness, and amused themselves with marbles, outside of the door, or invited other lads to play with them. Or they would, in these days of abundance of bad books, dissipate their time in reading piratical romances, or lives of highwaymen. Mr. Thompson, who knew his lad, furnished him with better amusement. He handed him a Latin grammar, to fill up his leisure; and young

Daniel committed lesson after lesson, with hearty good-will ; having no higher immediate object than to escape idleness, and gratify Mr. Thompson. He had never thought of studying Latin or Greek ; and going to college was a thing so clearly among impossibilities, as he then thought, that the idea of such a happiness never occurred to him. He thought he must make the most of his advantages, and procure a good common school education. It was during this year that the following incident occurred, which we give in Mr. Webster's own words. It is extracted from a letter written by Mr. Webster, while spending a summer vacation among the scenes of his youth.

“Looking out at the east windows at this moment, with a beautiful sun just breaking out, my eye sweeps over a rich and level field of one hundred acres. * * I could see a lamb on any part of it. I have ploughed it, and raked it, and hoed it ; but I never mowed it. Somehow I never could learn to hang a scythe. I had not wit enough. My brother Joe used to say that my father sent me to college, in order to make me equal to the rest of the children !

“Of a hot day in July—it must have been in one of the last years of Washington's administra-

tion — I was making hay with my father, just where I now see a remaining elm tree. About the middle of the afternoon, Hon. Abiel Foster, M. C., who lived in Canterbury, six miles off, called at the house, and came into the field to see my father. He was a worthy man, college-learned, and had been a minister, but was not a man of any considerable natural power. My father was his friend and supporter. He talked a while in the field, and then went away. When he was gone, my father called me to him, and we sat down beneath the elm, on a hay-cock. He said, ‘My son, that is a worthy man. He is a member of Congress. He goes to Philadelphia, and gets six dollars a day, while I toil here. It is because he had an education, which I never had. If I had received an equally good education, I should have been in Philadelphia in his place. I came near it, as it was. But I missed it, and now I must continue to work here.’

“‘My dear father,’ said I, ‘you shall not work. Brother and I will work for you, and wear our hands out, and you shall rest.’

“And I remember to have cried; and I cry now at the recollection.

“‘My child,’ said he, ‘it is of no importance to

me; I now live but for my children. I could not give your elder brother the advantages of knowledge, but I can do something for you. Exert yourself; improve your opportunities; learn, *learn*; and, when I am gone, you will not need to go through the hardships which I have undergone, and which have made me an old man before my time."

Master Tappan, as we have seen, had spoken to Colonel Webster of the capacity of his sons. Mr. Thompson seconded the schoolmaster's advice, that Daniel should be educated; for, the remarkable tenacity of Daniel's memory, and the ease with which he had committed the grammar, had much surprised and pleased the lawyer. Daniel's mother urged that he should have an opportunity for the development of his powers. Brother Joe, who, with his waggery, had a right good heart, added his voice, putting the case in the humorous light to which reference has already been made. And the slight form of Daniel was also urged, as making it necessary that he should be enabled to pursue some less laborious occupation than that of a New Hampshire farmer. It was, therefore, determined that Daniel should be qualified to teach a country school, that his winter months might be

profitably passed, without the exposure of wood-cutting and other winter avocations in New England. In the summer he could still assist upon the farm. There were many such instances within their knowledge, and the young teachers had done well. With these views, it was determined to send Daniel Webster to Phillips' Academy in Exeter.

This Academy, one of the best in the United States, had then been founded about fourteen years, and was under the charge of the same principal, Dr. Benjamin Abbott, who lived, and remained at Exeter, until after his Salisbury pupil and many others had attained high positions in life. On a bright morning in May, 1796, Daniel Webster, with his father, set out for Exeter. Daniel rode on a side-saddle, which was sent to Exeter for a lady to return upon to Salisbury; for, in those days, carriages were few and roads bad. Dressed in his home-made suit, and thus curiously mounted, Daniel rode forth to seek his fortune; not in any knight-errant or erratic mood, but with the fixed purpose of making the best use of the advantages which the partiality of his father had opened to him. The journey required the greater part of three days—two nights being

spent upon the road. On the fourth day, the father took his son to apply for admission into the Academy. Fifty years ago there was much more dignity preserved among official personages than at present; and young Daniel, with a beating heart, but still self-possessed, presented himself for examination. Dr. Abbott handed him the Bible, and requested him to read the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

Probably no task could have been given in which the lad of fourteen could have acquitted himself to better advantage. He was familiar with the book, and accustomed to read aloud. With an accent and emphasis which evinced his knowledge of what he read, and his ability to convey the meaning to his hearers, Daniel read of the treachery of Judas, the Last Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, the betrayal of the Saviour, the weakness of Peter, the Mock Trial before the Council, and the other incidental themes of the chapter. Daniel was in a strange place, and before a different auditory from the travellers who had so often listened to him. He had not the assurance of the love and admiration of his hearers, as when he went over the like passages

at his father's fireside. But he concentrated his mind on the subject-matter, and forgot all else in its solemn meaning. Dr. Abbott listened with admiration, and suffered him to proceed to the end of the long chapter. He had never heard it read better; and when Daniel closed and returned him the book, he simply said, without asking another question, "Young man, you are qualified to enter this institution."

Daniel remained only nine months at Exeter. His first entrance was a sore trial; for, notwithstanding his innate consciousness of power, his unfashionable wardrobe, his unpolished manners and general rustic appearance, exposed him to the derision of lads, who would now be forgotten but for their accidental meeting as classmates with Daniel Webster. A few days after entering the institution he returned to his lodgings in great despondency, and told his friends that the city boys in the Academy were continually laughing at him, because he was at the foot of the class, and came from the back-woods. This petty social tyranny, so common among boys, completely depressed the future orator. In referring to his school-days, Mr. Webster tells us: "I believe I made tolerable progress in most branches which I

attended to while in this school, but there was one thing I could not do — I could not make a declamation; I could not speak before the school. The kind and excellent Buckminster sought especially to persuade me to perform the exercise of declamation, like other boys, but, notwithstanding, I could not do it. Many a piece did I commit to memory, and recite and rehearse in my own room, over and over again; yet, when the day came, and the school collected to hear the declamations, when my name was called, and I saw all eyes turned to my seat, I could not raise myself from it. Sometimes the instructors frowned; sometimes they smiled. Mr. Buckminster always pressed and entreated, most winningly, that I would venture, venture only once. But I never could command sufficient resolution.” It is stated that Daniel was effectually discouraged when first called upon. He became embarrassed, burst into tears, and sat down.

Joseph Stevens Buckminster was one of the tutors in the Academy; Nicholas Emery was another. Both these gentlemen, as well as Dr. Abbott, discerned the rustic boy's talent; and the progress which he had made in his Latin recreations, in Mr. Thompson's office, stood him in good

stead. Mr. Emery, who was made acquainted with Daniel's difficulties and troubles with the boys, treated him with marked kindness, by way of encouragement. He urged him to pay no heed to their taunts, but give his whole thoughts to his books, and all would come out right. At the end of the first quarter, Mr. Emery mustered his class in a line, and formally took the arm of young Webster, and conducted him to the head of the class, saying at the same time that this was his proper position. Cheered by this triumph, Daniel applied himself with new diligence. After the review at the end of the second quarter, when the class was again mustered for the summing up, Mr. Emery said,

“Daniel Webster, gather up your books, and take down your cap.”

Strangely puzzled to know what this could mean, and fearing that he was to be expelled, the lad silently obeyed.

“Now, sir, you will please report yourself to the teacher of the *first class*; and you, young gentlemen, will take an affectionate leave of your classmate, for you will never see him again.”

Such was the mode in which he had distanced those who had affected to despise him, and pre-

sumed upon their better dress and fuller pockets, to tease the backwoods boy.

It will be readily supposed that such progress, and in so short a period, could only have been accomplished by diligent study. The qualification of young Webster for a schoolmaster was still the leading object of his studies; and Latin was pursued as a secondary branch. The English branches, such as would be needed for the instruction of a country school, received his chief attention. Col. Webster's limited means made it necessary that this object should be pursued with the strictest economy; his whole estate being worth less than three thousand dollars. To prosecute his studies at a less expense, Daniel was removed from Exeter, and placed in the family of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Wood, of Boscawen, where board and tuition were given him for one dollar per week.

But, in the interim between leaving Exeter and going to Boscawen, young Daniel, now in his sixteenth year, had an opportunity to show how far his education to that date could be made available. While he continued his own studies at home, a class was collected for him to teach, few, if any, being younger than he, and some of them his seniors. He was found fully competent, and the

proceeds of this school no doubt were applied to the relief of his father in bearing the expenses of his education. Many a distinguished man in New England has "worked his way" in the same mode; and it has proved a most excellent preparation for after life; teaching them practically the cost and the value of their education.

The impression which Daniel made upon Dr. Abbott, at Exeter, was not lost, although he was removed from that institution. Dr. Abbott was an intimate friend of Dr. Wood, and they had an interchange of opinions upon the rare talents which the lad had exhibited. Dr. Wood was one of the trustees of Dartmouth College, and it was upon his earnest recommendation that Daniel should be fitted for that institution, that his father consented. Dr. Wood proposed to attend to the preparatory studies of the lad; and it was this which determined the farther progress of Daniel. Up to this time the original purpose only had been entertained—to educate a county schoolmaster. Dr. Wood had experience and discrimination. He resided in Boscawen, beloved and respected, over half a century; and, during that period, personally instructed one hundred and fifty-five pupils in his own house. Of these, one hundred and five

entered college. About one-third of Dr. Wood's pupils became clergymen, twenty took up the profession of the law, and a few graduated as physicians. Among his pupils, Dr. Wood had the honest pride to see many of the leading men of New Hampshire, and some who have achieved a national reputation.

While on his way to Boscawen with his father, to take his place in the household of Dr. Wood, Daniel was first apprised of the conclusion which his father and his teachers had reached concerning him. The old-fashioned mode of treating children,—and we are inclined to think that the modern is far from being in all respects an improvement,—kept the will and purposes of the boy in abeyance to the authority of the parents. So, while Drs. Wood and Abbott had consulted and advised, and Colonel Webster had consented, Daniel's mind was undisturbed by any speculation upon the future.

The advantages of a college education were above the highest dreams of the lad. His emotions, when the intention of his father were communicated to him, exceeded his power of expression. While he eagerly assented, and felt, to use his own words, "as much exultation one moment

as ever was felt by a Roman Consul, to whom a triumph had been decreed," in the next he was unmanned by his feelings. "I remember," he once said, "the very hill which we were ascending, through deep snows, in a New England sleigh, when my father made known this promise to me. I could not speak. How could he, I thought, with so large a family, and in such narrow circumstances, think of incurring so great an expense for me? A warm glow ran all over me, and I laid my head on my father's shoulder and wept."

CHAPTER III.

Virgil and Cicero — Don Quixote — Grotius and Puffendorf — A long Recitation — Daniel a poor Harvester — A new Impetus to his Studies — Advantages of Education in the Olden Time — The Journey to Hanover — The true blue Suit — Storm and Delay — Arrival at Hanover — Making Toilet in Fast Colors — Manly Appearance, in Spite of Disadvantages — Daniel enters as Freshman — His Habits while at Dartmouth — His Manner of Composition — Fondness for Out-door Exercise — Apostrophes to the Cod and the Trout — Mr. Webster and the Farmer — Mr. Webster and the Quails — His First Trout.

DANIEL WEBSTER did not commence his preparation for College like a lad who could go through it as a routine duty, occupying the time of an established course, and pursuing it at his leisure. It was all important that he should reduce the expense of his education, by shortening the time employed in acquiring it. He entered Dr. Wood's family at the beginning of March, 1797; and, in August of the same year entered Dartmouth College. The good use of his limited opportunities, which he had already made, prepared him for this

very brief course. And yet, though Daniel Webster had the strongest inducements to exertion, and possessed wonderful natural powers, we are not to suppose that the preparation made in so very short a period was anything like thorough. Daniel had already some acquaintance with the rudiments of the Latin language, and he had, moreover, a fondness for it. He had neither time nor money to expend on things not absolutely necessary, and his preparation in Greek was barely sufficient to fulfil the requirements of the college, upon admission. He gave only two months to this language; and this imperfect preparation he always regretted. In college it was always a task rather than an intellectual pleasure; and, as lately as the year before his death, he expressed his regret that he had not pursued the Greek language, till he could read and understand Demosthenes in his own tongue. What Daniel Webster was compelled to forego, by want of opportunity, should not be neglected by those who have time and means. The deficiency that he acknowledged, would be more apparent in a man of less natural capacity.

The Latin language was his delight. He read the entire *Æneid* as a pleasant occupation, long

before he was called to recite it, in the course of instruction. When he entered the class of young men who were preparing for college with Dr. Wood, he found them reviewing Cicero's orations. Daniel had never read them; but he commenced, and kept pace with his classmates; and he has been heard to say that no task was so easily accomplished by him as the reading of Cicero. Probably the "Social Library" had rendered him familiar with the history and themes of the Latin orator; and he could enter with understanding into his thoughts, and appreciate his argument. At Boscawen he found another "Social Library;" and in this he sought relaxation from his severer studies. It was his rule to work with all his heart and mind while at work, and when he sought relief to abandon himself to it. At Boscawen he met, for the first time, an English translation of Don Quixote. He bears the same testimony to the interest of this work, that other men of mind have done. "I began to read it," he says, "and it is literally true that I never closed my eyes until I had finished it; nor did I lay it down any time for five minutes; so great was the power of this extraordinary book upon my imagination." But his imagination was not alone consulted in

his leisure; for, besides Virgil and Cicero, which he read with his tutor, and other classics which he looked over under the same direction, he read, in the original, two large works of Grotius and Puffendorf.

With Daniel Webster's residence at Dr. Wood's an anecdote is connected, which implies a good reproof of those who would neglect study for amusement, and cite his example as their apology. Mr. Webster had a very retentive memory, and could, in a few moments, commit what it cost others hours of labor to accomplish. This faculty in memorising made him appear negligent, to the superficial observer, who measured study by the time occupied, rather than by the results obtained. His favorite recreations were walks with his gun and his rod. His preceptor once hinted to him, that the spending of so much time in rambling might have an injurious influence upon the habits of the other boys. He did not complain that his task was neglected, nor that he was unprepared for his recitations.

The sensitive lad could not endure any suspicion that he neglected his duties. He applied himself instantly to Virgil, and spent the entire night at his self-imposed task. The next morning

he read his hundred lines without tripping or mistake. Dr. Wood expressed his approbation, and prepared to leave, as he had an engagement, of which, by the way, Daniel was aware. "I can recite a few more lines," said the lad. "Well, let us have them," said the Doctor; and a hundred more were read. Breakfast was repeatedly announced, and the Doctor, impatient to go, asked how much farther he could read. "To the end of the Twelfth Book," was the reply. The Doctor complimented him upon his recitation, but begged to be excused from so long a session. "You may have the whole day, Dan, for pigeon-shooting," said his tutor, when retiring. But the conscientious lad never gave the Doctor an opportunity to reprove him again, and avoided even the appearance of neglect, by strictly keeping his study hours.

While Daniel was studying with Dr. Wood, his father sent for him to come home, and assist for a few days in harvesting. He packed up his bundle of clothes and answered the summons. On the next morning he went to work in the fields, while the father visited a neighboring town upon business. His slender limbs proved unequal to the labor, in which he probably over-exerted himself,

and he returned to the house before noon with blistered hands. His mother readily excused him from farther labor. An hour after dinner, however, found Daniel so much refreshed, that he put the old family horse in harness, and, placing his sisters in a wagon, drove to a famous hill, where he, boy-like, worked harder in running than he could have done in the hay-field. His father laughed upon hearing from Daniel and his mother the report of the day's work; and the next morning handed Daniel his bundle of clothes, and, with a smile, pointed towards Boscawen. The boy walked off, and, as he left the house, his old friend, Thompson, asked, "Where, now, Dan?" "Back to school, sir," said the boy. "I thought it would be so," said the other, with a quiet laugh: and the boy walked back to his preceptor. Dr. Wood, who had probably regretted the harvest excursion as lost time, received him with a cordial greeting, and told him that, with hard study, he might enter Dartmouth College at the next commencement. At this time Daniel did not even know the Greek Alphabet; but, with the encouragement of his tutor, and characteristic energy, he applied himself to the work, and accomplished it. His father had told him that he should go to

college, "if he was compelled to sell every acre of land to pay the expense."

Daniel appreciated the sacrifice, and looked forward with high expectations to the privilege. Now, by the increase of opportunities, and the high improvement, in cities and large towns especially, of public schools, education has become a far different matter. There is much less difference, now, between the acquirements of the collegian and the information of those who have not the privilege of academic education, than there was in the days of Daniel's boyhood. From the common school to the college was a long remove. The college graduate was a man distinctly marked, because few lads commenced such higher branches as are now included in our public-school courses, except with a view to enter the learned professions. Edward Everett, in his *Memoir of Webster*, has the following remarks upon the subject:

"In truth, a college education was a far different affair fifty years ago from what it has since become, by the multiplication of collegiate institutions, and the establishment of public funds in aid of those who need assistance. It constituted a person at once a member of an intellectual aristocracy. In many cases it really conferred quali-

fications, and in all was supposed to do so, without which professional and public life could not be entered upon with any hope of success. In New England, at that time, it was not a common occurrence that any one attained a respectable position in either of the professions, without this advantage. In selecting the members of the family who should enjoy the privilege, the choice not unfrequently fell upon the son whose slender frame and early indications of disease, unfitted him for the laborious life of our New England yeomanry.

While Daniel Webster was preparing to enter college, his friend, Dr. Wood, who was a Trustee of Dartmouth, was preparing the Faculty to receive him. The Doctor went to them personally to recommend Daniel, "not so much for what he had learned, as for what" he told them, "he could learn, if he had an opportunity." Mr. Thompson was also a member of the Board of Trustees, and their joint influence, with that of Dr. Abbott, and the respect in which Mr. Webster's father was held, procured the application of the young man a respectful consideration, and predisposed his examiners to be lenient.

It is noticeable how much the self-reliance of Daniel Webster had been increased by success,

and by the knowledge of what he could effect if he bent his energies to the work. He saw the young gentlemen at Dr. Wood's, who were to enter with him at college, fully prepared, and leisurely reviewing the books which he was first reading, with all the disadvantages of haste and want of time. Nevertheless, he persevered in his original intention.

The incidents of his journey to Dartmouth are among the most interesting passages of his boy life; and we dwell upon such, because it is for youth we are writing. The details of the events of the manhood of such men as Webster cannot be compressed within our space. And, in the larger and more elaborate works, which are devoted to the public life and services of statesmen, the particulars which we seek to preserve are passed over.

Daniel Webster's first Dartmouth suit was true blue, domestic manufacture, coat, vest, and pantaloons. The writer of this memoir remembers that homespun manufacture well—literally *redolent* of the substances which gave it its hue,—stealing and giving color as well as odors, for, where the perspiration oozed from the skin, the colors struck in. Those, as we have already remarked, were

not the days of public conveyances. Daniel set out from home on horseback, his books and wardrobe packed in saddle-bags. Hardly had he left the house when a furious storm burst upon the traveller. It continued two days, and swelled the mountain streams, which he had to pass, to torrents, washing roads, and carrying away bridges. The delays which this inopportune tempest caused, protracted his journey, and, on his arrival, he had no time to lose. The Faculty was in session for the examination of candidates, and his presence was required immediately.

Professor Shurtleff, now one of the Faculty of Amherst College, entered the institution at the same time, as a student. He says: "I put up, with others, at what is now called the Olcott House, which was then a tavern. We were conducted to a chamber where we might brush our clothes, and make ready for examination. A young man, a stranger to us all, was soon ushered into the room. Similarity of object rendered the ordinary forms of introduction needless. We learned that his name was Webster; also where he had studied, and how much Latin and Greek he had read, which, I think, was just to the limit

prescribed by the law at that period, and which was very much below the present requisition.

Daniel found, on attempting his toilet, that the fast colors of his new suit were fast in discharging from their proper place, and no less fast in adhering where they were not desired. He was blue throughout—linen and skin, and all. He improved his plight as well as he could, but after all his efforts, he says of himself, that he was not only "*black* Dan, but *blue* Dan." He stated what opportunities he had had, what time he had spent in preparation, and what books he had read, and recounted his wayside disaster. "Thus, you see me," he said, "as I am; if not entitled to your approbation, at least to your sympathy." The diffident boy among boys, could hold up his head before men. He answered the questions addressed to him without embarrassment, and with full possession and command of his resources. Like many other lads of nervous sensibility, he found what he had feared as a fiery ordeal, a much less severe trial than he expected, and was entered as a Freshman at Dartmouth College.

Hon. John Wheelock, LL.D., was President of Dartmouth College at the time of Mr. Webster's entrance. Hon. Bezaleel Woodward, and Rev.

John Smith, D. D., were among the Professors. These gentlemen, and particularly the latter, were so much impressed with his character and talents, that his Dartmouth experience proved a good recommendation to his further progress, as we shall presently see. Professor Shurtleff, whom we have already quoted, thus bears testimony to Mr. Webster's habits while at Dartmouth :

“ Mr. Webster, while in college, was remarkable for his steady habits, his intense application to study, and his punctual attendance upon all the prescribed exercises. I know not that he was absent from a recitation, or from morning and evening prayers in the chapel, or from public worship on the Sabbath ; and I doubt if ever a smile was seen upon his face during any religious exercise. He was always in his place, and with a decorum suited to it. He had no collision with any one, nor appeared to enter into the concerns of others, but emphatically *minded his own business*. But, as steady as the sun, he pursued with intense application the great object for which he came to college. This, I conceive, was the secret of his popularity in college, and his success in subsequent life.”

Another authority, the writer of a paper in

Putnam's Monthly, speaks as follows respecting Mr. Webster's career in college: "It has been so commonly reported about our colleges that Webster was not a laborious student, that many gentlemen who have written eulogies upon the illustrious statesman and orator, have felt bound to apologize for him as a scholar. This is all wrong. His early life was as strongly characterized by those homely virtues, industry, perseverance, and punctuality, as his later career. It may safely be questioned whether any undergraduate of any of our New England Colleges ever left behind him so many written and printed proofs of his talents and application, as Mr. Webster. He always scorned the imputation of idleness. When informed that such a tradition prevailed among students, he exclaimed, 'What fools they must be, to suppose that a man could make anything of himself without hard study!' He regarded every hour of his student life as sacred to study and reflection; that his first object was a thorough mastery of his daily tasks, and his next purpose was, to store his mind with useful knowledge. His solitary wanderings were devoted to reflection, and frequently to the composition of his themes; his social inter-

course was always rendered profitable by literary conversation."

The classmates of Mr. Webster, quoted by the last-mentioned writer, thus speak of his college life: "His habits were good. He had the highest sense of honor and integrity. He was sure to understand the subject of his recitation; sometimes, I used to think, in a more extended and comprehensive sense than his teacher. He never liked to be confined to small technicalities or narrow views, but seemed to possess an intuitive knowledge of whatever subject he was considering. He did not find it necessary, as was the case with most of us, to sit down to hard work three or four hours, to make himself master of his lesson, but seemed to comprehend it in a larger view, and would, sometimes, procure other books on the same subject, for further examination, and employ hours in close thought, either in his room or in his walks, which would enlarge his views, and, at the same time, might, with some, give him the character of not being a close student.

"His great powers of memory he turned to good account, both in retaining the thoughts of others, and in fixing the results of his own reflections. He was accustomed to arrange his thoughts for

debates and declamations in his solitary rambles upon the borders of neighboring brooks, angling for trout, or scouring the surrounding forests in quest of game. When his thoughts were once arranged in his mind, the business of writing was merely mechanical. Amusement and study were so strangely wedded, that careless observers mistook the profound thinker for a heedless trifler. He *composed* his college themes at his leisure, and *wrote* them just before they were due. Accordingly, he was often known to commence the writing of a public declamation after dinner, which he was to speak at two o'clock the same day. The New Hampshire hour for dinner, fifty years ago, as it still is in many rural districts, was meridian. In one instance, while writing, a sudden flaw of wind took away his paper through the open window, and it was last seen flying over the meeting-house. He appeared upon the stage, notwithstanding his loss, and spoke with his usual fluency and eloquence.

General Lyman records a conversation with a lady who resided in Hanover when Mr. Webster was at Dartmouth. She was somewhat younger than he, and, among the memories of her girlhood, are recollections of Daniel Webster, of whom her

brother was a classmate. She says that Mr. Webster was of slight form, and had the appearance of a person of feeble constitution. He was a brunette in complexion; his hair was black as jet, and, when turned back, displayed a forehead which always excited great admiration. His dark eyes shone with extraordinary brilliancy. In his youth, among other soubriquets, Mr. Webster had that of "All Eyes." With this delicacy of constitution, we may readily suppose that the out-door recreations, invigorating yet not violent, in which Mr. Webster indulged, were as necessary to the health of his body as to the strength of his mind. Probably, to them, and to his habit of early rising, and devoting the morning to study, Mr. Webster owed that renovation of his physical strength, which made him in after years as remarkable for his iron constitution, as in youth he had been for an opposite appearance. He was quite an adroit swimmer and skater, and a very good marksman. In the pursuit of anything he was an enthusiast. The brooks on his father's farm were, in those early days, famous for trout, and young Daniel knew all their haunts and habits. With his fishing-rods, cut from the bushes, and his horse-hair lines, of his own manufacture, he was ready,





WEBSTER FISHING AT FRYBURG.

at every proper moment of leisure, while at home, in college, and even to the last days of his life, to follow the streams, and take the fish which can only be captured by skill and patience.

By the side of the brook many of his college themes were composed. In the solitude of the forest, or the trout run, he arranged his legal arguments. On the day preceding that on which he was to deliver the address of welcome to General Lafayette, in Boston, in 1825, Mr. Webster was out rod-fishing in his yacht. The sport was not good, and the party were about giving it up in despair, when Mr. Webster hooked a large cod, and, just as its nose appeared above water, he exclaimed, in a loud and pompous voice, "Welcome! all hail! and thrice welcome, citizen of two hemispheres!" We may imagine the amazement of the party when, on the next day, they heard these words addressed to the nation's guest. Such incidents exhibit what his thoughts were occupied with, even during his apparent abandonment to amusement.

Another anecdote, of a similar nature, is related respecting Mr. Webster's composition of his famous address, delivered on Bunker Hill. It was arranged in his mind, and studied by the side of Marshpee

Brook, fishing-rod in hand. As he landed in quick succession a couple of huge trout, and transferred them to his basket, he thus apostrophized them, "Venerable men! you have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives, that you might behold this joyous day." Stern and thoughtful as Mr. Webster appeared in public, he had a high zest for humor; and, that the above sentence, which occurs in his speech, should have been first addressed to the fishes, while his mind was occupied with it, is perfectly in character with his playfulness in private life. He very much enjoyed a harmless joke, even when he was the subject of it, and used to relate the following with great glee:

He went from Marshfield, some years since, on a trouting expedition to Sandwich. Coming to a fine stream, he stepped from his wagon, and meeting the owner of the farm, the usual salutations passed. Mr. Webster inquired if there were any trout in the stream.

"Well," said the farmer, "some people fish here, but I don't know what they do get."

"I'll throw my line in," said Mr. Webster, "and see what there is."

Mr. Webster walked the banks of the stream, trying his luck, and the old farmer followed him. Mr. Webster soon remarked,

“You have some bog on your farm.”

“Yes,” rejoined the farmer, “and that ain’t the worst of it.”

Mr. Webster still continued to throw his line into the deep pools. After a silence of a few moments, he said,

“You have plenty of briars here.”

“Yes,” said the farmer, “and that ain’t the worst of it.”

Mr. Webster began to get somewhat discouraged. To be sweltering in the heat of an August day, bitten by mosquitoes, scratched by briars, and yet not be able to raise a single fish, was too much for his patience—dropping his rod, he remarked,

“I do not believe there are any trout here.”

“And that ain’t the worst of it,” reiterated the farmer.

“Well,” said Mr. Webster, “I would like to know *what the worst of it is?*”

“*There never was any here,*” replied the waggish farmer.

While Mr. Webster, in 1851, was engrossed with the affairs of the nation, as Secretary of

State, he was almost in the daily habit of fishing at the little Falls of the Potomac. His only and constant attendant on these occasions was his Private Secretary, Mr. Lanman, whom he called for the purpose at the early hour of four, in the morning. He was pleased if he caught a few rock-fish or bass, and quite contented if he caught nothing; for he enjoyed the fresh air and exercise, and returned from the fishing-ground before the public offices were opened. Air and exercise were his mental stimulus. He had no boyish fondness for taking the lives of animals, and never hesitated to reprove those who had this weakness.

Mr. Lanman relates that, while he was walking with Mr. Webster one morning, at Marshfield, they were joined by a Boston gentleman. A flock of quails ran across the road, and the stranger worked himself up into an intense excitement, and exclaimed, "Oh! if I only had a gun, I could easily kill the whole flock; have you not one in your house, Mr. Webster?" Mr. Webster calmly replied that he had a number of guns, but that no man whatsoever was ever permitted to kill a quail or any other bird, a rabbit or a squirrel, on his property. He then proceeded to comment on the slaughtering propensities of the American

people, remarking that, in this country, there was an almost universal passion for killing and eating every wild animal that chanced to cross the pathway of man; while in England and other portions of Europe, these animals were kindly protected and valued for their companionship. "This, to me, is a great mystery," said he, "and, so far as my influence extends, the birds shall be protected." Just at this moment one of the quails mounted a little knoll and poured forth a few of its sweet and peculiar notes. Mr. Webster continued, "There, does not that gush of song do the heart a thousandfold more good than could possibly be derived from the death of that beautiful bird?" The stranger thanked Mr. Webster for his reproof, and said afterward that this little incident had taught him to love the man whom he had before only admired as a statesman.

Having gone before the course of our narrative, to insert in this place anecdotes of the latter part of Mr. Webster's life, we may correct the error by going back to his early childhood, and showing who taught him to fish. While a bare-footed boy, in his fifth year, he was riding with his father upon the same horse. "Dan!" said the Colonel, "how would you like to catch a trout?" Of course

the lad could not but like such an achievement. They dismounted, and the father cut a hazel-twigg, to which he affixed a hook and line, which he produced from his pocket. Turning over a flat stone, he found a worm for bait, and told his son to creep upon a rock, and carefully throw it to the further side of a deep pool. The boy did as he was bidden, hooked a fish, lost his balance, and fell into the water; whence he was drawn ashore by his father, still clinging to his end of the line, while the fish was fast to the other. And that was the way Daniel Webster's first trout was landed.

CHAPTER IV.

Studies of the first two Years at Dartmouth—Young Webster a Schoolmaster in the Vacations—His Fondness for a Scholar's Life—His desire that his Brother Ezekiel should share his Pursuits—Difficulties in the Way—The Young Men pass a Night in considering them—Importance of Ezekiel's aid to his Father—Daniel introduces the Subject to the Old Gentleman—The Mother called in to advise—Her prompt Decision—Ezekiel enters upon a Course of Preparation, and Daniel returns to College—Change in his Costume—His Attention, through Life, to Personal Neatness—Third Year in College—Mr. Webster takes high Rank—Fourth of July Oration in 1800—Anecdote of General Stark.

DURING the first year at college, Mr. Webster's studies were the Greek and Latin languages, the rules for speaking and composition, and the elements of mathematics. In the second year new books were taken in these languages, and logic and the higher branches of mathematics were added. Greek and mathematics were not studies in which his mind was interested. Logic, rhetoric, and the belles-lettres, history, biography and poetry were his delight. In geography, ancient and modern,

he was a proficient. In the Latin language he was, from the first, at home. The dictionary and grammar were impressed on his memory, and he read the Latin classics as a recreation, and not as a task. "If," he says, "at this early stage I had a desire for the future, it was to write as Virgil and Tacitus wrote, and to speak as Cicero spoke." But, though a good scholar, he did not rank as the best during his first years in college. Nor was it to be wondered that he could not, under his disadvantages, rank with those who had entered with everything in their favor.

We have mentioned Mr. Webster's first attempt at school-teaching, in 1797. In 1798 he again taught in his college vacation. A new school-house had been erected in Salisbury, at "Shaw's Corner;" and Mr. Webster received for his second attempt—having gained one year in age, and more in experience—six dollars a month. During his first term of teaching, his salary was only four dollars. Many of the district schools in New England are thus taught by students; but, during the last fifty years, the salary has advanced from this low standard, which was the rule when the student preparing for college was required to pay only one dollar per week for board and tuition.

At the end of Daniel's second year he spent a vacation at home. With advancement in his college course, and additional attention bestowed upon English literature, Mr. Webster was more in his element. Having reached a breathing-place in his progress, he began to feel more sensibly the happiness he enjoyed. Professor Sanborn thus narrates one of the most honorable passages in Daniel Webster's life: "He had tasted the sweets of literature, and enjoyed the victories of intellectual effort. He loved the scholar's life. He felt keenly for the condition of his brother Ezekiel, who was destined to remain on the farm, and labor to lift the mortgage from the old homestead, and furnish the means for his brother's support. Ezekiel was a farmer, in spirit and in practice. He led his laborers in the field, as he afterwards led his class in Greek. Daniel knew and appreciated his superior intellectual endowments. He resolved that his brother should enjoy the same privileges as himself.

"That night the two brothers retired to bed, but not to sleep. They discoursed of their prospects. Daniel utterly refused to enjoy the fruit of his brother's labor any longer. They were united in sympathy and affections, and they must

be united in their pursuits. But how could they leave their beloved parents, in age and solitude, with no protector? They talked and wept, and wept and talked till dawn of day. They dared not broach the matter to their father. Finally Daniel resolved to be the orator upon the occasion. Judge Webster was then somewhat burdened with debts. He was advanced in age, and had set his heart upon having Ezekiel as his helper. The very thought of separation from both his sons was painful to him. When the proposition was made, he felt as did the Patriarch of old, when he exclaimed, 'Joseph is not, and will ye take Benjamin away?'

"A family council was called. The mother's opinion was asked. She was a noble-minded woman. She was not blind to the superior endowments of her sons. With all a mother's partiality, however, she did not over-estimate their powers. She decided the matter at once. Her reply was, 'I have lived long in the world, and been happy in my children. If Daniel and Ezekiel will promise to take care of me in my old age, I will consent to the sale of all our property, at once, and they may enjoy the benefit of all that remains after our debts are paid.' This was a

moment of intense interest to all the parties. Parents and children all mingled their tears together, and sobbed aloud at the thought of separation. The father yielded to the entreaties of his sons and the advice of his wife. Daniel returned to college; Ezekiel took his little bundle in his hand, and sought on foot the scene of his preparatory studies. He resided, like his brother Daniel, at Boscawen, with Dr. Wood, and in one year went through his preparatory studies, entering at Dartmouth in 1803.

Young Webster's dress and appearance upon entering college we have already described. The accomplishment of his wishes and hopes respecting his brother opened a new era in his feelings. He was more elastic in spirits. Deeming nothing a trifle which affected the estimation in which others held him, and thence reflected disagreeably upon himself, he introduced a change in his costume. He remembered the mortification to which he was exposed at Exeter, and, after the commencement of his junior year, dressed better than the average of his class—but not foppishly. Throughout his life Mr. Webster paid strict attention to the proprieties of costume. He considered it a duty to be so prepared in all particulars, that those with

whom he was to converse, or the audience which he was expected to address, should perceive that he entertained a proper respect for them. He paid strict attention to the lesser as well as more important requirements of etiquette, and was always dressed in a becoming manner. His favorite and almost uniform costume for the Senate, the Bar, or public meetings, was a blue coat with gilt buttons, a buff-colored vest, and black pantaloons. We mention these matters here, because the hint for his attention to them appears to have been taken by him from his early school experiences; and because, while foppishness is ridiculous, and expensive clothing is not desirable or necessary, cleanliness of person, and a proper regard to the customs of society, are due to every man's regard for health, and his respect for his friends.

In the third year of his college course, besides the languages, Daniel read Natural and Moral Philosophy, and Rhetoric. "Watts on the Mind" and "Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding," which were not in the regular college course, he committed to memory. Besides regular attention to his prescribed studies, he improved the opportunity of his enlarged access to books, to

read whatever was useful or graceful in English literature. As a classical and belles-lettres scholar (Greek always excepted), as a writer, and as a debater, he ranked first in his class. One of his classmates thus speaks of him: "The truth is, that by his thorough investigation of every subject and every study, whilst in college, he rose to the very pinnacle of fame; and, since he has left college, all that he has had to do was to sustain his elevated position; and all his classmates have been compelled to look up high to see him, which I have always been proud to do."

In the year 1800, Daniel being then eighteen years old, his friends and admirers, in college and out, united in a pressing invitation to him to deliver to the citizens of Hanover an oration on the Fourth of July. So much were the people pleased with it, that they requested a copy for publication, and it was printed. The edition of Daniel Webster's works, published under his eye, does not contain it. Undoubtedly he regarded it as too crude and boyish to be included among his more mature writings. Perhaps—and very probably—he had not reserved a copy, and had nearly forgotten it. It was not among the subjects of which he most delighted to converse. Delivered over

half a century ago, while the wounds of the Revolution were yet fresh, it has a haughty bitterness towards Britain which we do not find in Mr. Webster's later speeches. Daniel's father was an earnest Federalist — so much so, that it is related of him, that being taken sick on a journey while passing through a village noted for its opposite political character, he begged his physician to remove him as soon as possible out of the place. "He was born," he said, "a Federalist, had lived a Federalist, and could not die in any but a Federalist town!" Young Daniel's allusion to France, and his commendation of the course of the then Executive of the United States, the elder Adams, show that the young man shared in the political feelings of his father. Whatever reasons may have operated with the editors of Mr. Webster's speeches, to reject this interesting memorial of his youth, its insertion comes strictly within our place. It was the first strictly public performance of the young man; and, making all proper allowances for the circumstances which we have noted, it is not at all unworthy of his fame. It was but recently rescued from oblivion by General Lyman; and we present it entire, that our young readers

may compare it with the great orator's later speeches, and draw their own conclusions.

The oration was preceded by the usual forms, the ringing of bells, firing of cannon, and marching in procession. Prayer, an anthem, and the reading of the Declaration of Independence, opened the exercises. Those celebrations of the Fourth in country towns were great affairs, even thirty years ago. As the nation grows older, if it loses some of the extravagance and boasting spirit of its youth, we fear that it loses also something of the sentiment of patriotism, and fervency of natural love and veneration for its great men. Daniel, of course, did himself justice in the delivery; and we may well imagine that his performance produced a great sensation. The pamphlet copy of it bears on the title-page the following motto, from Addison :

“Do thou, great Liberty, inspire our souls,
And make our lives, in thy possession, happy,
Or our deaths glorious in thy just defence.”

“COUNTRYMEN, BRETHREN, AND FATHERS :

“We are now assembled to celebrate an anniversary, ever to be held in dear remembrance by

the sons of Freedom. Nothing less than the birth of a nation — nothing less than the emancipation of three millions of people from the degrading chains of foreign dominion, is the event we commemorate.

“Twenty-four years have now elapsed since these United States first raised the standard of Liberty, and echoed the shouts of Independence.

“Those of you who were then reaping the iron harvest of the martial field, whose bosoms then palpitated for the honor of America, will, at this time, experience a renewal of all that fervent patriotism; of all those inscrutable emotions which then agitated your breasts. As for us, who were either then unborn, or not far enough advanced beyond the threshold of existence, to engage in the grand conflict for Liberty, we now most cordially unite with you, to greet the return of this joyous anniversary, to welcome the return of the day which gave us Freedom, and to hail the rising glories of our country!

“On occasions like this, you have hitherto been addressed from the stage, on the nature, the origin, and the expediency of civil government. The field of political speculation has been explored, by persons possessing talents to which the speaker of

the day can have no pretensions. Declining therefore a dissertation on the principles of civil polity, you will indulge me in slightly sketching those events which have originated, nurtured, and raised to its present grandeur, this new republic.

“As no nation on the globe can rival us in the rapidity of our growth since the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, so none, perhaps, ever endured greater hardships and distresses than the people of this country previous to that period. We behold a feeble band of colonists, engaged in the arduous undertaking of a new settlement in the wilds of North America. Their civil liberty being mutilated, and the enjoyment of their religious sentiments denied them in the land that gave them birth, they fled their country, they braved the dangers of the then almost un navigated ocean, and sought, on the other side of the globe, an asylum from the iron grasp of tyranny, and the more intolerable scourge of ecclesiastical persecution.

“But gloomy indeed was the prospect when they arrived on this side of the Atlantic. Scattered in detachments along a coast immensely extensive, at a distance of more than three thousand miles from their friends on the Eastern Con-

continent, they were exposed to all those evils, and encountered or experienced all those difficulties to which human nature seemed liable. Destitute of convenient habitations, the inclemencies of the seasons harassed them, the midnight beasts of prey prowled terribly around them, and the more portentous yell of savage fury incessantly assailed them. But the same undiminished confidence in the Almighty God which prompted the first settlers of this country to forsake the unfriendly climes of Europe, still supported them under all their calamities, and inspired them with fortitude almost divine. Having a glorious issue of their labors now in prospect, they cheerfully endured the rigors of the climate, pursued the savage beast in his remotest haunt, and stood, undismayed, in the dismal hour of Indian battle.

“Scarcely were the Indian settlements freed from those dangers which at first environed them, ere the clashing interests of France and Britain involved them anew in war. The Colonists were now destined to combat with well-appointed, well-disciplined troops from Europe; and the horrors of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife were again renewed. But these frowns of fortune, distressing as they were, had been met without a

sigh, and endured without a groan, had not Great Britain presumptuously arrogated to herself the glory of the victories achieved by American militia. Louisburg must be taken, Canada attacked, and a frontier of more than one thousand miles defended by untutored yeomanry, while the honor of every conquest must be ascribed to an English army.

“But while England was thus tyrannically stripping her colonies of their well-earned laurels, and triumphantly weaving them into the stupendous wreath of her own martial glories, she was unwittingly teaching them to value themselves, and effectually to resist, on a future day, her unjust encroachments.

“The pitiful tale of taxation now commences—the unhappy quarrel which resulted in the dismemberment of the British Empire has here its origin. England, now triumphant over the united powers of France and Spain, is determined to reduce to the condition of slaves her American subjects.

“We might now display the Legislatures of the several States, together with the general Congress, petitioning, praying, remonstrating, and, like dutiful subjects, humbly laying their grievances before

the throne. On the other hand we could exhibit a British Parliament, assiduously devising means to subjugate America; disdaining our petitions; trampling on our rights; and menacingly telling us, in language not to be misunderstood, '*Ye shall be slaves!*' We could mention the haughty, tyrannical, perfidious Gage, at the head of a standing army; we could show our brethren, attacked and slaughtered at Lexington; our property plundered and destroyed at Concord! Recollections can still pain us with the spiral flames of burning Charlestown, the agonizing groans of aged parents, the shrieks of widows, orphans and infants!

"Indelibly impressed on our memories still live the dismal scenes of Bunker's awful mount, the grand theatre of New England bravery; where slaughter stalked, grimly triumphant; where relentless Britain saw her soldiers, the unhappy instruments of despotism, fallen in heaps beneath the nervous arms of injured freemen!

"There the great Warren fought, and there, also, he fell! Valuing life only as it enabled him to serve his country, he freely resigned himself a willing martyr in the cause of Liberty, and now he's encircled in the arms of glory.

“Peace to the patriot’s shade—let no rude blast
Disturb the willow that nods o’er his tomb;
Let orphan tears bedew his sacred urn,
And Fame’s loud trump proclaim the hero’s name,
Far as the circuit of the sphere extends.

“But, haughty Albion, thy reign shall soon be
o’er! Thou shalt triumph no longer; thine empire
already reels and totters; thy laurels even
now begin to wither and thy frame decay. Thou
hast at length roused the indignation of an in-
sulted people; thy oppressions they deem no
longer tolerable.

“The 4th of July, 1776, has now arrived, and
America, manfully springing from the torturing
fangs of the British Lion, now rises majestic in
the pride of her sovereignty, and bids her eagle
elevate his wings!

“The solemn Declaration of Independence is
now pronounced, amidst crowds of admiring citi-
zens, by the supreme council of our nation; and
received with the unbounded plaudits of a grateful
people!

“That was the hour when patriotism was
proved—when the souls of men were tried. It
was then, ye venerable patriots, it was then you
lifted the indignant arm, and unitedly swore to be

free! Despising such toys as subjugated empires, you then knew no middle fortune between Liberty and Death. Firmly relying on the protection of Heaven, unwarped in the resolution you had taken, you then, undaunted, met—engaged—defeated the gigantic power of Britain, and rose triumphant over the aggressions of your enemies.

“Trenton, Princeton, Bennington and Saratoga were the successive theatres of your victories, and the utmost bounds of creation are the limits of your fame! The sacred fire of freedom, then enkindled in your breasts, shall be perpetuated through the long descent of future ages, and burn, with undiminished fervor, in the bosoms of millions yet unborn.

“Finally, to close the sanguinary conflict, to grant to America the blessings of an honorable peace, and clothe her heroes with laurels, Cornwallis, at whose feet the kings and princes of Asia have since thrown their diadems, was compelled to submit to the sword of Washington.

“The great drama is now completed: our Independence is now acknowledged; and the hopes of our enemies are blasted forever. Columbia is now seated in the forum of Nations, and the Empires

of the world are amazed at the bright effulgence of her glory.

“Thus, friends and citizens, did the kind hand of over-ruling Providence conduct us, through toils, fatigues, and dangers, to Independence and Peace. If piety be the rational exercise of the human soul, if religion be not a chimera, and if the vestiges of heavenly assistance be clearly traced in those events which mark the annals of our nation, it becomes us, on this day, in consideration of the great things which have been done for us, to render the tribute of unfeigned thanks to that God, who superintends the universe, and holds aloft the scale that weighs the destiny of nations.

“The conclusion of the Revolutionary War did not accomplish the entire achievements of our countrymen. Their military character was then, indeed, established; but the time was coming which should prove their practical sagacity—their ability to govern themselves.

“No sooner was peace restored with England, (the first grand article of which was the acknowledgement of our Independence,) than the old system of confederation, dictated at first by necessity, and adopted for the purposes of the moment,

was found inadequate to the government of an extensive empire. Under a full conviction of this, we then saw the people of these States engaged in a transaction, which is undoubtedly the greatest approximation towards human perfection the political world ever yet witnessed, and which will, perhaps, forever stand in the history of the world without a parallel. A great Republic, composed of different States, whose interests in all respects could not be perfectly compatible, then came deliberately forward, discarded one system of government, and adopted another, without the loss of one man's blood.

“There is not a single government now existing in Europe, which is not based in usurpation, and established, if established at all, by the sacrifice of thousands. But, in the adoption of our present system of jurisprudence, we see the powers necessary for government, voluntarily flowing from the people, their only proper origin, and directed to the public good, their only proper object.

“With peculiar propriety we may now felicitate ourselves on that happy form of mixed government under which we live. The advantages resulting to the citizens of the Union are utterly incalculable, and the day when it was received by

a majority of the States shall stand on the catalogue of American anniversaries, second to none but the birth-day of Independence.

“In consequence of the adoption of our present system of government, and the virtuous manner in which it has been administered by a Washington and an Adams, we are this day in the enjoyment of peace, while war devastates Europe. We can now sit down beneath the shadow of the olive, while her cities blaze, her streams run purple with blood, and her fields glitter with a forest of bayonets! The citizens of America can this day throng the temples of Freedom, and renew their oaths of fealty to Independence; while Holland, our once sister republic, is erased from the catalogue of nations; while Venice is destroyed, Italy ravaged, and Switzerland—the once happy, the once united, the once flourishing Switzerland—lies bleeding at every pore!

“No ambitious foe dares now invade our country. No standing army now endangers our liberty. Our commerce, though subject in some degree to the depredations of the belligerent Powers, is extended from Pole to Pole; our Navy, though just emerging from non-existence, shall soon vouch for the safety of our merchantmen, and bear the

thunder of Freedom around the ball. Fair science, too, holds her gentle empire amongst us, and almost innumerable altars are raised to her divinity. Yale, Providence and Harvard now grace our land; and Dartmouth, towering majestic above the groves which encircle her, now inscribes her glory on the register of fame. Oxford and Cambridge, those oriental stars of literature, shall soon be outshone by the bright sun of American science, which displays his broad circumference in uneclipsed radiance.

“Pleasing indeed were it here to dilate on the future grandeur of America; but we forbear, and pause for a moment to drop the tear of affection over the graves of our departed warriors. Their names should be mentioned on every anniversary of Independence, that the youth of each successive generation may learn not to value life, when held in competition with their country’s safety.

“Wooster, Montgomery and Mercer fell bravely in battle, and their ashes are now entombed on the fields that witnessed their valor. Let their exertions in their country’s cause be remembered, while liberty has an advocate, and gratitude has a place in the human heart.

“Greene, the immortal hero of the Carolinas,

has since gone down to the grave, loaded with honors, and high in the estimation of his countrymen. The courageous Putnam has long slept with his fathers; and Sullivan and Cilley, New Hampshire's veteran sons, are no more remembered among the living.

“With hearts penetrated with unutterable grief, we are at last constrained to ask, where is our Washington? where the hero who led us to victory? where the man who gave us freedom? where is he who headed our feeble army, when destruction threatened us? who came upon our enemies like the storms of winter, and scattered them like leaves before the Borean blast? Where, O, my country! is thy political saviour? Where, O, humanity! thy favorite son?

“The solemnity of the assembly, the lamentations of the American people will answer, ‘Alas, he is no more—the mighty is fallen!’ Yes, Americans, Washington is gone! He is now consigned to dust, and sleeps in ‘dull, cold marble.’ The man who never felt a wound but when it pierced his country—who never groaned but when fair Freedom bled—is now forever silent!

“Wrapped in the shroud of death, the dark dominions of the grave long since received him,

and he rests in undisturbed repose! Vain were the attempt to express our loss—vain the attempt to describe the feelings of our souls! Though months have rolled away since his spirit left this terrestrial orb, and sought the shining worlds on high, yet the sad event is still remembered with increased sorrow. The hoary-headed patriot of '76 still tells the mournful story to the listening infant, till the loss of his country touches his heart, and patriotism fires his breast. The aged matron still laments the loss of the man beneath whose banners her husband has fought, or her son has fallen. At the name of Washington the sympathetic tear still glistens in the eye of every youthful hero. Nor does the tender sigh yet cease to heave in the fair bosom of Columbia's daughters.

“Farewell, O Washington, a long farewell!
Thy country's tears embalm thy memory;
Thy virtues challenge immortality;
Impressed on grateful hearts thy name shall live,
Till dissolution's deluge drown the world!

“Although we must feel the keenest sorrow at the demise of our Washington, yet we console ourselves with the reflection that his virtuous

compatriot, his worthy successor, the firm, the wise, the inflexible Adams, still survives. Elevated by the voice of his country to the supreme executive magistracy, he constantly adheres to her essential interests, and with steady hand draws the disguising veil from the intrigues of foreign enemies, and the plots of domestic foes.

“Having the honor of America always in view, never fearing when wisdom dictates, to stem the impetuous torrent of popular resentment, he stands amid the fluctuations of party and the explosions of faction, unmoved as Atlas,

“While storms and tempests thunder on its brow,
And oceans break their billows at its feet.

“Yet all the vigilance of our Executive, and all the wisdom of our Congress, have not been sufficient to prevent the country from being in some degree agitated by the convulsions of Europe. But why shall every quarrel on the other side of the Atlantic interest us in its issue? Why shall the rise or the depression of every party there, produce here a corresponding vibration? Was this continent designed as a mere satellite to the other? Has not Nature here wrought all her operations on the broadest scale? Where are the

Mississippies and the Amazons, the Alleghanies and the Andes of Europe, Asia, and Africa? The natural superiority of America clearly indicates that it was designed to be inhabited by a nobler race of men, possessing a superior form of government, superior patriotism, and superior virtues.

“Let the nations of the East vainly waste their strength in destroying each other. Let them aspire at conquest, and contend for dominion, till their continent is deluged in blood. But let none, however elated by victory, however proud of triumph, ever presume to intrude on the neutral position assumed by our country.

“Britain, twice humbled for her aggressions, has been taught to respect us. But France, once our ally, has dared to insult us! She has violated her treaty obligations—she has depredated on our commerce—she has abased our government and riveted the chains of bondage on our unhappy fellow-citizens. Not content with ravaging and depopulating the fairest countries of Europe; not yet satisfied with the contortions of expiring republics, the convulsive throes of subjugated nations, and the groans of her own slaughtered citizens—she has spouted her fury across the Atlantic; and the stars and stripes of the United

States have been almost attacked in our harbors! When we have demanded reparation, she has told us, 'Give us your money, and we will give you peace.' Mighty nation! Magnanimous Republic! Let her fill her coffers from those towns and cities which she has plundered, and grant peace if she can to the shades of those millions whose death she has caused.

"But Columbia stoops not to tyrants; her spirit will never cringe to France; neither a supercilious, five-headed Directory, nor the gasconading pilgrim of Egypt, will ever dictate terms to sovereign America. The thunder of our cannon shall ensure the performance of our treaties, and fulminate destruction on Frenchmen, till the ocean is crimsoned with blood and gorged with pirates!

"It becomes us, on whom the defence of our country will ere long devolve, this day most seriously to reflect on the duties incumbent upon us. Our ancestors bravely snatched expiring Liberty from the grasp of Britain, whose touch is poison; shall we now consign it to France, whose embrace is death? We have seen our fathers, in the days of our country's trouble, assume the rough habiliments of war, and seek the hostile field. Too full of sorrow to speak, we have seen them wave a

last farewell to a disconsolate, a woe-stung family. We have seen them return, worn down with fatigue and scarred with wounds; or we have seen them perhaps, no more. For us they fought—for us they bled—for us they conquered. Shall we their descendants, now basely disgrace our lineage and pusillanimously disclaim the lineage bequeathed to us? Shall we pronounce the sacred valediction to freedom and immortal Liberty on the altars our fathers have raised to her? No! The response of the nation is, ‘No!’ Let it be registered in the archives of Heaven. Ere the religion we profess, and the privileges we enjoy are sacrificed at the shrine of despots and demagogues—let the sons of Europe be vassals; let her hosts of nations be a vast congregation of slaves; but let us, who are this day free, whose hearts are yet unappalled and whose right arms are yet nerved for war, assemble before the hallowed temple of American Freedom, and swear to the God of our Fathers, to preserve it secure, or die at its portals!”

Such was the oration. If it pleased his auditory, we may well imagine with what delight his father pored over the printed pages of his son’s

aiden effort—the father, who, in his declining days, when he engaged in conversation with a stranger, did not fail to speak of his “son at Dartmouth.” He was the old man’s idol, and, as Dr. Alexander, of Princeton, remarks, of that son “it was easy to see that he was proud.”

There are faults in the style, extravagances to which Daniel’s poetical mind led him, but which he afterwards corrected—and corrected by diligent labor. There are prejudices, received at second hand from traditionary sources, which his reading afterwards modified. And there are boastful expressions about the young Republic of America, which a more mature taste led him to abandon, while he lost none of his true patriotism. But who can wonder at such things, at that day, and in a young man accustomed to such encounters as the following, which is related by Mr. Lanman :

“Daniel’s father and General Stark, the hero of Bennington, were fast friends on the battlefield, and afterwards in the walks of civil life. Professional business, early in Mr. Webster’s career, called him to Manchester, the residence of General Stark. He found him surrounded with friends, and in the midst of convivial enjoyment. The parties were introduced, and the General, who no

doubt knew all about the son from his old comrade in arms, cried out, 'Why, Dan Webster you're as black as your father; and he was so black that I never could tell when he was covered with powder, for he was one of those chaps who are always in the thickest of the fight!'"

CHAPTER V.

Specimens of Daniel Webster's College Composition — The Dartmouth Gazette — Man — Essay on Peace — Eulogy on a Classmate — Washington — Later Poetry — "The Memory of the Heart" — Mr. Webster an Improvisator — Mr. Webster and the Child — Commencement Exercises — Mr. Webster's Disappointment — Professor Woodward's Opinion of Mr. Webster — The Pupil's kind Recollections — Lessons of Daniel Webster's Childhood.

POETRY was a favorite exercise with Daniel Webster while in college. Indeed, it is said that, attracted by the brilliant and fervid style of President Wheelock, he gave stronger indications of rising to eminence in poetry, than in law or politics. He often wrote in verse for public declamation; and, in his early compositions, exhibited great fertility of imagination. Close study and laborious mental discipline tempered down this habit of mind, and made his style more terse and vigorous; although to the last, at proper opportunities, he exhibited his power in pathos and word-painting. Some early specimens of his poetry, contributed to the "Dartmouth Gazette," we sub-

join. The contents of this sheet were furnished by the Faculty and students of the College, and there was no more frequent contributor than Daniel Webster. The following extracts are from a poem published in the "Gazette."

"When that grand period in the Eternal Mind,
Long pre-determined, had arrived, behold
The universe, this most stupendous mass
Of things, to instant being rose. This globe,
For light and heat dependent on the sun,
By power supreme was then ordained to roll,
And on its surface bear immortal MAN,
Complete in bliss, the image of his God.
His soul to gentle harmonies attuned,
Th' ungoverned rage of boisterous passions knew not.
Malice, revenge, and hate were then unknown;
Love held its empire in the human heart—
The voice of love alone escaped the lip,
And gladdening Nature echoed back the strain.
O, happy state! too happy to remain;
Temptation comes, and man a victim falls!
Farewell to peace, farewell to human bliss,
Farewell ye kindred virtues, all farewell!
Ye flee the world, and seek sublimer realms.
Passions impetuous now possess the heart,
And hurry every gentler feeling thence.

* * * * *

Is it now asked why man for slaughter pants,
Raves with revenge, and with detraction burns?

Go ask of Ætna why her thunders roar,
Why her volcanoes smoke, and why she pours
In torrents down her sides the igneous mass
That hurries men and cities to the tomb !
These but the effects of bursting fires within,
Convulsions that are hidden from our sight,
And bellow under ground. Just so in man,
The love of conquest and the lust of power
Are but the effects of passion unsubdued.
T' avert the effects, then deeply strike the cause,
O'ercome the rage of passion, and obtain
The empire over self. This once achieved,
Impress fair virtue's precepts on the heart,
Teach to adore his God, and love his brother;
War then no more shall raise the rude alarm,
Widows and orphans then shall sigh no more,
Peace shall return, and man again be bless'd."

In perfect accordance with the sentiment of this poetry, is a prize essay on peace, written by Daniel Webster while in college. "For what was man created," he asks, "but to cultivate the arts of peace and friendship, to beam charity and benevolence on all around him, to improve his own mind by study and reflection, to serve his God with all the powers of his soul, and finally, when the days of his years are numbered, to bid adieu to earthly objects with a smile, to close his eyes on the pillow of religious hope, and sink to repose

in the bosom of his Maker? Why, then, is the object of our existence unattained? Why are the fairest countries on the earth desolated and depopulated with the ravages of war? Why are the annals of the world crowded with the details of murder, treason, sacrilege, and crimes that strike the soul with horror but to name them? O, corrupted nature! O, depraved man! Those who are delighted with tales of bloodshed and destruction find a rich repast in the daily accounts from Europe, where

“Gigantic slaughter stalks with awful strides,
And vengeful fury pours her copious tides.’

“But, to the child of humanity, to the man of true benevolence, it is a sad and painful reflection, that iniquity should usurp the reign of justice, that the liberties and lives of millions should be sacrificed, to satiate the ambition of individuals, and that tyrants should wade through seas of blood to empire and dominion. War, under certain circumstances, is proper, is just. When men take arms to burst those chains that have bound them in slavery, to assert and maintain those privileges which they justly claim as natural rights, their object is noble, and we wish them success.”

As a specimen of the poetic style of Mr. Webster's early prose writings, we give the following extract from a eulogy pronounced by him on a classmate, who died in 1801. His name was Ephraim Simonds. He was universally beloved, and a dear friend of Mr. Webster.

"All of him that was mortal now lies in the charnels of yonder cemetery. By the grass that now nods over the mounds of Sumner, Merrill, and Cook, now rests a fourth son of Dartmouth, constituting another monument of man's mortality. The sun, as it sinks to the ocean, plays its departing beams on his tomb, but they reanimate him not. The cold sod presses on his bosom; his hands hang down in weakness. The bird of the evening shouts a melancholy air on the poplar, but her voice is stillness to his ears. While his pencil was drawing scenes of future felicity,—while his soul fluttered on the gay breezes of hope,—an unseen hand drew the curtain, and shut him from our view."

After a glowing exordium, the orator proceeded to paint the virtues of the deceased; and dwelt with an especial earnestness upon his religious excellence.

"To his surviving friends, gladdening is the re-

flection that he died, as he lived, a firm believer in the sublime doctrines of Christianity. * * * *
Whoever knew him in life, or saw him in death, will cordially address this honorable testimony to his memory :

“ ‘ He taught us how to live, and O, too high,
The price of knowledge, taught us how to die ! ’ ”

The eulogy was published, and after Mr. Webster left college other students committed portions of it for declamation. At the time of the original delivery a large audience was moved to tears, and even when repeated at second hand, by the young orators, its effect was not lost. This eulogy was admitted to be the most beautiful and finished performance of Mr. Webster's college life,—unsurpassed in the traditions of the college, as it was unequalled by contemporary efforts. The son of religious parents, and educated under religious influences, the young orator did not fail to take the occasion to exhibit the power of religion to sustain and console in scenes of sorrow, persecution, and death. Scripture images and allusions were very frequently introduced by Mr. Webster in his writings and speeches. The following apostrophe to Washington is from one of his earliest poems :

“Ah, Washington ! thou once didst guide the helm,
And point each danger to our infant realm ;
Didst show the gulf where Faction’s trumpets sweep,
And the big thunders frolic o’er the deep ;
Through the red wave didst lead our bark, nor stood,
Like Moses, on the other side the flood.
But thou art gone—yes, gone—and we deplore
The man, the Washington, we knew before.
But when thy spirit mounted to the sky,
And scarce beneath thee left a tearless eye—
Tell, what Elisha then thy mantle caught,
Warmed with thy virtue—with thy wisdom fraught?”

The following graceful trifle was written in 1839—forty years after the time of which we are writing. It is entitled “The Memory of the Heart.”

“If stores of dry and learned lore we gain,
We keep them in the memory of the brain ;
Names, things, and facts, whate’er we knowledge call,
There is the common ledger for them all ;
And images on this cold surface traced
Make slight impressions and are soon effaced.

“But we’ve a page more glowing and more bright,
On which our friendship and our love we write ;
That these may never from the soul depart,
We trust them to the *memory of the heart*.
There is no dimming—no effacement here ;
Each new pulsation keeps the record clear ;
Warm, golden letters all the tablet fill,
Nor lose their lustre till the heart stands still.”

Mr. Webster possessed a great and ready command of words, and must have been a sparkling contributor to the recreations of the literary society of which he was a member in Dartmouth, since in later years he has given frequent evidences of his capacity to trifle elegantly, as well as to wield the ponderous arms of logic and argument. On one occasion, while Mr. Webster was Secretary of State, a farewell dinner was given to Senator Foote, who had been elected Governor of Mississippi, and was going home to assume his new duties. At the close of the dinner, Mr. Foote addressed Mr. Webster in a parting speech, in which he so exhausted the language of felicitous compliment, that the company present were curious to know what Mr. Webster could say in answer.

Gracefully to acquit one's-self in such a dilemma, is a task of which few men are capable, and those who have least depth can often support themselves under the weight of compliment with more address than the profoundest thinkers. Mr. Webster slowly rose from his chair and answered Mr. Foote, not in prose, but in poetry. The farther he proceeded, the happier was he in his improvisation; and the company were completely taken

by surprise at this new phase of Mr. Webster's mind. The long slumbering poetry of his nature, extinguished as it had seemed for nearly half a century, by the cares of State and the labors of the law, burst forth to the admiration of those who had not suspected that such a vein existed in his composition. The poetry was far above mediocrity, and the circumstances of the occasion showed that it must have been extempore. At another time he was unexpectedly presented, at a banquet, with a bouquet of flowers, by a beautiful and graceful child. In a similar fit of inspiration he addressed her in acknowledgment, in a strain of prose poetry, abounding with graceful and beautiful images. Mr. Webster could also, upon occasion, trifle in an amusing style of composition. Among his college exercises, a classmate remembers a composition, every line of which ended in *-ion*.

At the commencement of Dartmouth College, in the year in which he graduated, Mr. Webster's share of the public exercises was a discourse on the then recent discoveries in chemistry, particularly those of Lavoisier, then just made public. Mr. Webster also delivered an oration before "The United Fraternity," upon "The Influence of

Opinion." A contemporary newspaper says: "A numerous audience manifested a high degree of satisfaction at the genius displayed. Elegance of composition and propriety of delivery distinguished the performance."

One of Mr. Webster's eulogists, Mr. Hillard, says of him: "He was an ambitious man. He desired the highest office in the gift of the people. But on this subject as on all others there was no concealment in his nature. And ambition is not a weakness, unless it be disproportioned to the capacity. To have more ambition than ability is to be at once weak and unhappy. With him it was a noble passion, because it rested upon noble powers. He was a man cast in a heroic mould. His thoughts, his wishes, his passions, his aspirations, were all on a grander scale than those of other men. Unexercised capacity is always a source of rusting discontent. The height to which men may rise is in proportion to the upward force of their genius, and they will never be calm till they have attained their predestined elevation."

The child is father of the man, and the same characteristics which Mr. Hillard notices in the character of the statesman, were observable in the young man amid the objects of college rivalry.

His friends conceded him the first rank, and in the debates and exercises of the society of which he was a member his position was unequivocal. No one thought of Daniel Webster as second to any. But even giant intellect cannot supply that knowledge of particulars, which must be acquired by longer study and better opportunities than young Webster had enjoyed. While in the general summing up he was probably unquestionably superior to all his classmates, in the details he had not that proficiency which, by the strict rules of college judgment, entitles a student to the highest honors at graduation. He thought, as did his personal friends also, that the valedictory would be assigned to him in the Commencement exercises; but the Faculty gave this honor to acquirements rather than to genius; and following, as was their duty, the custom and precedent of the institution, assigned the valedictory to him who strictly merited it, rather than to one who would undoubtedly have most distinguished himself, and honored the institution in the performance. Young Webster was grievously disappointed at this decision, and, in the presence of his classmates, destroyed his diploma as Bachelor of Arts, before he left the college. We presume, however, the dis-

appointment was of salutary influence. Had he graduated with the highest honors, he might have misunderstood his real position. The check this incident gave to him was a good discipline. He was spurred to continued study after he left the institution; a course he might not perhaps have taken had he carried away all the honors at Commencement, as he had done during the last two years in the unofficial judgment of the college.

We are not to suppose, however, that Mr. Webster's vexation about the circumstance was anything more than a temporary and natural emotion in a high-spirited boy. Nor did the Faculty regard it in any serious light, or abate their admiration of his genius, and their estimate of his capacities. Professor Woodward was accustomed to speak of Mr. Webster in high terms. He said: "That man's victory is certain who reaches the heart through the medium of the understanding. He gained me by combating my opinions; for I often attacked him merely to try his strength." Professor Woodward died just as Mr. Webster was entering upon the practice of law, and the highest honors were paid to his memory by the Faculty, the Students, and the Alumni of the College. Mr. Webster lamented the death of his old friend,

as a child laments the death of an indulgent father. Mr. Webster, through life, often spoke of him. He said that Dr. Woodward taught him how to think, and to express his thoughts with brevity, instead of indulging in the redundant style to which at first he was too much inclined. "That great scholar," said he, "taught me how much I could strike out of whatever I wrote or spoke, and still have enough to communicate all I desired to say."

Professor Woodward directed Mr. Webster's attention to the field in which he afterwards was so eminent. The themes of his conversation were the services and talents of such men as Ames, the Adamses, Henry, Hamilton, and other great American statesmen and orators of that era. From the journals he became familiar with the speeches and characters of Pitt, Burke, and the other leading men on the European side of the ocean. The Fourth of July oration which he delivered in his junior year, shows how well read he was in European politics and history.

Thus passed the college life of Daniel Webster. Laborious in his studies and correct in his habits, he received the following praise from the venerable

professor of whom we have spoken : “ Daniel was as regular as the sun. He never made a mistake ; he never stooped to do a mean act ; he never countenanced by his presence or conversation any college irregularities.” Hon. Edward Everett thus sums the lessons of the youth of Daniel Webster : “ The poor boy at the village school has taken comfort, as he has read that the time was when Daniel Webster, whose father told him he should go to college, if he had to sell every acre of his farm to pay the expense, laid his head on the shoulder of that fond and discerning parent, and wept the thanks he could not speak. The pale student who ekes out his scanty support by extra toil, has gathered comfort when reminded that the first jurist, statesman and orator of the time earned with his weary fingers, by the midnight lamp, the means of securing the same advantages of education to a beloved brother. Every true-hearted citizen throughout the Union has felt an honest pride, as he re-peruses the narrative, in reflecting that he lives beneath a Constitution and a Government, under which such a man has been formed and trained, and that he himself is compatriot with him. He does more ; he reflects

with gratitude that, in consequence of what that man has done, and written, and said—in the result of his efforts to strengthen the pillars of the Union—a safer inheritance of civil liberty, a stronger assurance that these blessings will endure, will descend to his children.”

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Webster at Fryeburg—His Labors as Assistant Recorder of Deeds—His Economy and Prudence—His continued Efforts at Improvement—Rev. Mr. Fessenden—Hon. T. W. Thompson—Mr. Webster resumes his Law Studies—Coke upon Littleton—Webster upon Coke—Webster as a Collector of Debts—Mr. Webster goes to Boston, and enters the Office of Hon. Christopher Gore—Character of that Gentleman—Mr. Webster's continued Industry—He is tendered the Clerkship of a New Hampshire Court—Under Advice of Mr. Gore he declines it—The Astonishment and Chagrin of his Father.

As soon as Mr. Webster had completed his college course, he entered the office of his old friend, Mr. Thompson, as a student. But his father's poverty, and the necessity of provision for his brother's education, pressed hard upon him, and the necessity became obvious and imperious, that the young student, now in his twentieth year, should do something, not only for his own support, but to meet the requirements of his father's family and his brother's tuition. Ezekiel had entered at Dartmouth during Daniel's last year there.

In this dilemma, a way was opened. Rev. Dr. John Smith recommended him as principal of an academy at Fryeburg, in the State of Maine (then a district of Massachusetts). Dr. Smith, Professor of Greek, Hebrew, and Oriental languages at Dartmouth, was the author of a Latin Grammar, edited some of the classics, and published also a Hebrew Grammar. He was a man whose word had weight, and whose recommendation was no small honor. Thus, in Mr. Webster's early life, we find every one who had to do with his culture and training, added to their immediate instruction their good offices, to advance him still farther. His schoolmasters and his friend, Mr. Thompson, urged his being sent to Phillips Academy. Dr. Abbott, the Principal of that institution, united with Rev. Dr. Wood, a Trustee of Dartmouth, to procure his introduction there; and upon leaving college, his late teachers recommended him to the trustees of the Fryeburg Academy. It is stated that, since the establishment of Dartmouth College, over three-fourths of the students have taught school during three months in the year. There is a singular propriety and fitness in this. Information is scattered among the children of the people, who thus indirectly

sustain the college, by aiding in the maintenance of the under-graduates.

Mr. Webster remained at Fryeburg nine months, performing the duties of his post to the entire satisfaction of the trustees, who, at the close of his engagement passed a respectful and affectionate vote of thanks to the young teacher. The school-house was burned down many years since, but the records of the trustees of the Academy are still in existence. In 1831, Mr. Webster, while returning with his son from a tour to the White Mountains, turned aside for a few days amid the scenes of his early labors in Fryeburg. There is Lovewell's Pond, of bloody memory, the scene of "Lovewell's fight." Here, in 1725, Captain John Lovewell, at the head of thirty-five men, met eighty savages, under a chief named Paugus. Of the Indians sixty were killed, and the remaining twenty fled, leaving the remains of Lovewell's band, only nine in number, masters of the field. The commanders of both parties were among the slain. Here, Mr. Webster, while engaged as a teacher, pursued the solitary rambles which were his recreation, with his book and fishing-tackle. But more interesting memorials than all others to his son, were the records above mentioned, and

two large bound volumes of deeds, in the office of the register, written by Mr. Webster's own hand, in a neat style of penmanship. In addition to his duties as preceptor, Mr. Webster copied deeds for the register's office, at the rate of twenty-five cents each; and this more than met his personal expenses, reserving the whole of his salary, which was \$350 per annum, to aid in meeting his brother's expenses at Dartmouth, and to defray the cost of his own professional education. These volumes, large folios, are monuments of what is seldom found allied to great genius—patient industry; and they excite the more wonder when it is remembered that they were the extra work of less than a year, written after spending the usual hours in the duty of teaching. Mr. Webster laughingly said, as he looked at them, nearly half a century after they were written, that the ache, which so much writing caused, was not yet out of his fingers!

While at Fryeburg, Mr. Webster borrowed and read, for the first time, Blackstone's Commentaries. He had also the use of the library of Rev. Wm. Fessenden, and the advice and encouragement of that gentleman. Under his counsel, he reviewed his college course, and strengthened himself in the

points of useful or agreeable knowledge, where he found or thought himself deficient. Of the Latin Classics he remained, through life, an admirer. Yet his was not the blind worship of the ancient which overlooks modern and contemporary excellence. Mr. Webster delighted to read and re-peruse what pleased him; preferring to master a few excellent books, rather than read indiscriminately. While at Fryeburg, he committed to memory Fisher Ames's celebrated speech on the British Treaty.

Returning home in September, 1802, with what to him, at that day, was a full exchequer—between two and three hundred dollars—Mr. Webster resumed his place in the office of his old friend and neighbor, Mr. Thompson. As this gentleman was Mr. Webster's first teacher in the science of law, our readers may be interested to know something of him. He was a graduate of Harvard College, Cambridge, and for some time a tutor in that university. He studied law with Theophilus Parsons, in Newburyport, and, when admitted to the bar, opened an office in Salisbury, where, as we have already stated, he became early interested in Mr. Webster. He had an extensive and lucrative practice, was a gentleman of honour-

able character, and stood high in the public estimation, as well as in his profession. He was one of the trustees of Dartmouth, and represented New Hampshire once in the United States House of Representatives. He was several times a member of the State Legislature, and served a term as a senator in Congress. In 1809, he left Salisbury, and removed to Concord, the capital of New Hampshire. He lived till 1819, long enough to discern the commencement of the fulfilment of the promise of his pupil's childhood, and to see his bare-footed office-boy enter upon a career in which he left his early friends far behind.

For two years Mr. Webster pursued his studies with Mr. Thompson, having a fellow-student in Parker Noyes, Esq., who was in the office when Mr. Webster entered, and who remained after he left, and succeeded to the business of Mr. Thompson, on his removal to Concord. Mr. Noyes shared in the interest which all who met young Daniel entertained for him, and he was a worthy companion for the ambitious student. Like all who were connected with Mr. Webster's youth, he was a man of a character to elevate and improve his junior. The office still remains as in the day when Webster read and studied there, fifty years

ago. General Lyman, who has the interest of a devotee in all that pertains to Mr. Webster, thus speaks of the old building:—"There stand the identical tables, book-cases, desks and chairs, which stood there in Mr. Webster's time. It is still a law-office, but years and years have gone by since the venerable proprietor (who is rich enough to forego the practice of the law) gave audience to his clients in these rooms. There are the old registries of law-suits, with entries made in the hand-writing of Mr. Webster; and there are the old books on which his mind dwelt so intently, and from which he drew some of the knowledge to which the most eminent judges have so often listened, to be instructed and convinced."

Mr. Webster had, as his first book to read, Coke upon Littleton, as was the custom at that period. As the result of his own experience, Mr. Webster says:—"A boy of twenty, with no previous knowledge of such subjects, cannot understand Coke. It is folly to set him upon such an author. There are propositions in Coke so abstract, and distinctions so nice, and doctrines embracing so many distinctions and qualifications, that it requires an effort not only of a mature mind, but of a mind both strong and mature, to understand

him. Why disgust and discourage a young man, by telling him he must break into his profession through such a wall as this?"

Many of the valuable works which have been published on the science of law, had not then appeared, and Mr. Webster had to grope in the dark, in unravelling black-letter webs, and deducing premises which have been unravelled by others. Along with his law-studies he kept up his research into English history, and his enjoyment of the Latin and English Classics. He read, during these two years, Sallust, Cæsar, and Horace. Some of the odes of the latter, which he translated, have been published. He devoted much time, also, to more intelligible law authorities than Coke.

Before his second year was closed, he showed himself competent to advise, frequently writing out opinions upon the cases submitted by clients, which Mr. Thompson adopted and signed as his own. He had great tact in the arrangement of the facts to be drawn from witnesses on the stand, and in marshalling the testimony and arranging details. General Lyman relates an amusing anecdote of the young student's success in collecting certain moneys due to a road-contractor. A turn-

pike was to be built, the contract being founded on subscriptions pledged by property-holders in Portsmouth, and along the line of the proposed improvement. In the midst of the work, from some dissatisfaction, the subscribers refused to pay. In this dilemma, the contractor applied to Mr. Thompson for advice. He wrote urgent letters to the delinquents, and sent Mr. Noyes, his elder clerk, but neither of these measures produced any money. Mr. Webster then volunteered. He came dashing into Portsmouth, with his horse in a foam; and, giving out that he had come "to get the money," desired the presence of the Sheriff of the county. Asking the privilege of Hon. Jeremiah Mason, he sat down at his table, and commenced the filling out of a writ for every delinquent; and, in those days, a debtor who could, must find bail, or be committed upon a writ, to await trial. A parley was soon proposed, and he courteously but peremptorily stated his intention to deliver the writs, at a certain hour, to the Sheriff for execution, if the demands were not satisfied. When his horse was brought to the office-door, for him to mount on his return, the delinquents finding that he was as good as his word, and that costs and trouble were inevitable,

unless they redeemed their subscriptions, paid over the money as fast as he could receive it; and he hurried back to his principal with the funds, much to the astonishment of Messrs. Thompson and Noyes, and to the satisfaction of Captain Kimball, the contractor.

Having acquired all that could be learned in the limited practice of a country office, Mr. Webster repaired to Boston. This was a step taken with the advice and consent of his father, who had consulted the circle of legal friends with whom, as a judge, he was acquainted. The young country-lawyer's clerk found, however, that he had left home in leaving New Hampshire. His application was declined by several of the leading members of the Suffolk Bar; but he persevered, ambitious, and sure of his own strength, until he obtained admission into the office of Hon. Christopher Gore. This was one of the fortunate events of Mr. Webster's life. In many other offices, his training would have been such as to make him a mere lawyer. Mr. Gore had at that time given up the common business of his profession—the details of ordinary practice, which Mr. Webster had already become familiar with. He did nothing as an attorney or solicitor; but being

much distinguished as a counsellor, was consulted in affairs of such importance as demanded great legal learning. He was a statesman and a civilian, a gentleman of the old school of manners, and a rare example of distinguished intellectual qualities, united with practical good sense and judgment. He was a graduate of Harvard, thoroughly educated; and in his classical tastes could sympathise with his pupil. He was acquainted with most of the great men of his time, at home and abroad; having passed several years in England as a commissioner, under Jay's treaty, for liquidating the claims of citizens of the United States for seizures by the British cruisers, in the early wars of the French Revolution. His library, amply furnished with works of professional and general literature, his large experience of men and things, and his uncommon amenity of temper, combined to make the period passed by Mr. Webster, in his office, one of the pleasantest of his life.

Mr. Knapp, the American Biographer, says of Mr. Gore's manner with his students, that he soon forgot or laid aside the office relation, and they stood to each other as mutual and intellectual friends, without regard to the difference in their

respective ages. Mr. Gore had a happy perspicuity of style, and communicated what he had to convey with so much exactness, discrimination, and taste, that his hearers seized his meaning, and became familiar with the facts and principles brought forward, without labor. In commercial and international law, he had a high reputation. He had been several years familiar with the best English lawyers, the forms and proceedings in the courts, and the customs of counsellors and advocates; and imparted to Mr. Webster a knowledge which books did not convey—the living law which governs courts, and can only be obtained by practice and observation.

The young lawyer had now reached a genial atmosphere, and his mind expanded under the realisation of the scope and magnitude of law as a science. The glimpses which he had discerned from a distance were verified, and distinctly extended; and the noble ambition which was part of his nature, found scope. But Daniel Webster was no dreamer, to lose time in speculations and abstractions, which could be made profitable by diligence. The advantages which Mr. Gore's office and assistance opened to him, were not thrown away. He regularly attended the sessions

of the courts, and reported their decisions. He read with care the leading elementary works of common and municipal law, with the best authors on the law of nations—some of them for a second and third time; diversifying these strictly professional studies, with more agreeable but not less useful reading. History is often the interpreter of law; and to English History, as well as to American colonial and political memoirs and treatises, Mr. Webster devoted great attention. Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, Burke, and Johnson, were said to be his favorites for miscellaneous reading. His chief study, however, was the common law; and more especially that part of it which relates to the now somewhat obsolete science of special pleading. He regarded this not only as a most refined and ingenious, but a highly instructive and useful branch of the law. Besides mastering all that was contained in Viner, Bacon, and other books then in common study, he waded through Saunders' Reports, in the original edition, and abstracted and translated into English, from the Latin and Norman-French, all the pleadings contained in the two folio volumes. This manuscript still remains, a monument of his industry. Both as an exercise of the mind, and as an acquisition

of useful learning, this work was of great advantage to him in his professional career. By the familiarity which he thus obtained with the forms of special pleading, guided by the clear teaching and practical suggestions of Mr. Gore, young Webster came soon to be regarded as a great special pleader. An edition of Saunders has since appeared, which makes the useful parts of the work much more accessible; but it is very much to be questioned whether the time saved by the student, by such aids, is not saved at the sacrifice of mental discipline. What is acquired by labor is longer retained, and more profoundly impressed upon the mind.

In January, 1805, the clerkship of the Court of Common Pleas for the county of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, fell vacant. The office was worth \$1500 per annum; in those days more than a competence—absolute wealth. The expenses incurred in educating his children pressed hard upon Daniel Webster's father, and he had mortgaged his property to meet it. A mortgaged farm—his children away—and himself in years, made a complication of anxiety in which the children deeply shared, without, at that period, the means of removing it. Ezekiel Webster, who had his

brother's habits of application, was teaching a select school in Boston, to assist in discharging the mortgage; and for a portion of the time he added the labors of an evening school for sailors and apprentices. In addition to his other employments and avocations, Daniel assisted his brother, taking his place when ill, or when absent from any other cause. Some of the first men in Massachusetts, Edward Everett among them, are proud to say that thus they received a portion of their education from Daniel Webster. In his speech upon the life and character of Webster, delivered at the meeting of the citizens of Boston, Mr. Everett feelingly and gracefully alluded to this circumstance; and referring to other and later connections with the great dead which he had enjoyed, and to the evidences of his friendship, of which he was affectionately proud, he quoted a letter from Mr. Webster, which he had received a short time before his death. In this letter, Mr. Webster thus refers to their friendship: "We now and then see, stretching across the heavens, a clear, blue, cerulean sky, without cloud, or mist, or haze. And such appears to me our acquaintance, from the time when I heard you for a week

recite your lessons in the little school-house in Short Street, to the date hereof."

Mr. Webster's father was one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas for the county of Hillsborough. He had only to express a wish that his son should receive the appointment, and that wish was gratified. Delighted with his success, he at once advised his son of it. The young man who felt so warmly for his friends, had deeper feelings for his kindred; and Daniel's delight was not less than his father's. Now their embarrassment was at an end, and the inconvenience which his aged parents were suffering on account of their children, would be removed. He regarded it as an early realisation of the benefits which an education had promised him; and though it was certainly a sacrifice of the high hopes of distinction which his young ambition had promised, he was glad, at such a sacrifice, to promote the happiness of those to whom his heart was knit. Under the influence of these feelings, he announced his good fortune to his legal counsellor and friend, and was astonished to hear Mr. Gore peremptorily and vehemently interpose his dissent—his utter disapprobation of the proposed change.

“But,” replied Daniel, “my father is poor, and I wish to make him comfortable in his old age.”

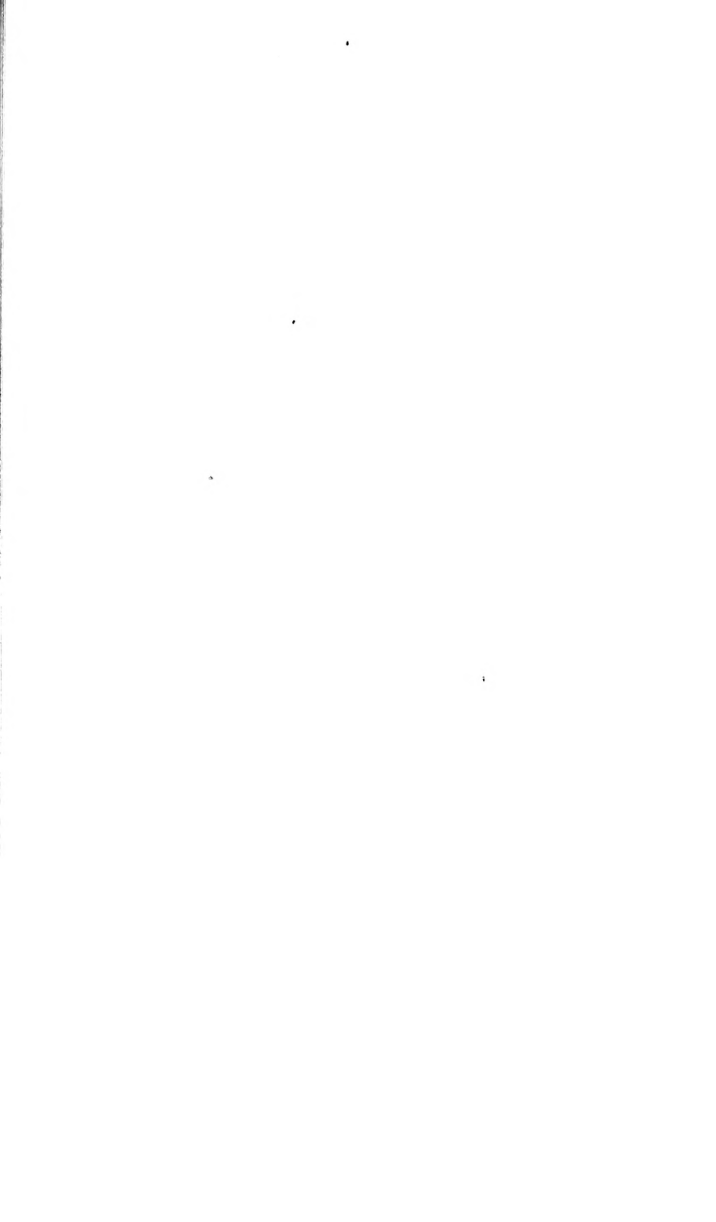
Mr. Gore admitted that such an appointment as Daniel had received, was a great compliment to so young a man; he acknowledged the force of family affection; but told him he would be much more able to gratify his friends by his professional labors, than in a clerkship. “But,” he continued, “you should think of the future more than the present. Become once a clerk, and you will always be a clerk, with no chance of obtaining a higher position. Go on, and finish your studies. You are poor enough, but there are greater evils than poverty. Live in no man’s favor; what bread you do eat, let it be the bread of independence; pursue your profession; make yourself useful to your friends, and a little formidable to your enemies, and you have nothing to fear.”

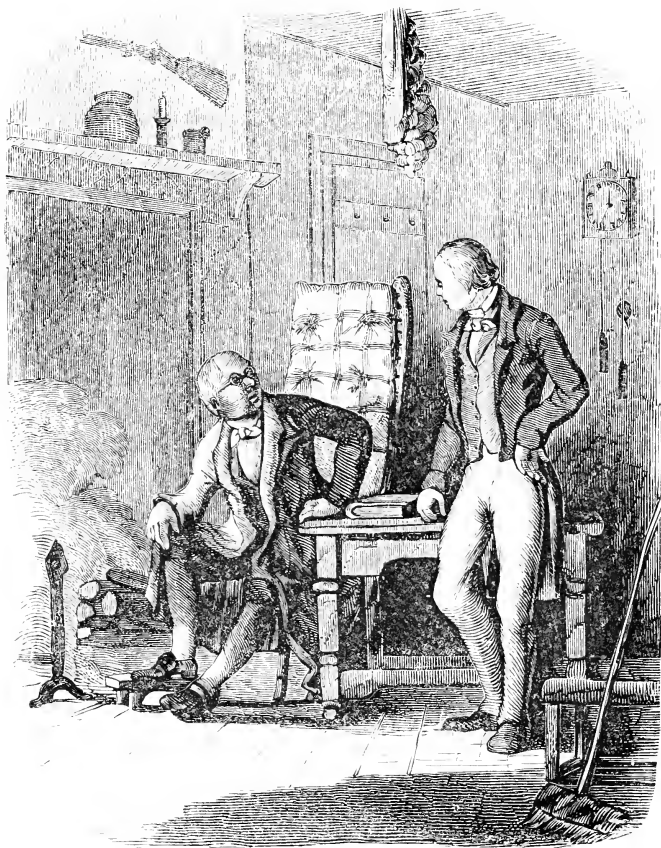
Mr. Webster appreciated the force of these suggestions, so far as his own wishes and hopes were considered; but there still remained all the difficulties in the case—the real difficulties, which words could not remove—his father’s embarrassments. In this dilemma, a friend, Rufus Green Emery, advanced the money necessary to relieve

his father's estate; and Mr. Webster, thus fortified, hastened home to announce in person to his father, his determination. He looked round for a country sleigh, for in those days there were no stages to the interior of New Hampshire; and finding one which was returning from market, took passage with the owner, and in two or three days was set down at his father's door. The same journey is now made by railroad in about four hours. At that time the winter was the great season for travelling; and the snow, hard beaten, was the nearest approach to a railroad which people knew. The writer well remembers the business activity of a Boston winter in the olden time; when the inn-yards were crowded with loads of frozen pork in sledges, and barrels of apples, and other country produce, carefully wrapped in blankets and old quilts to keep out the frost, were exchanged for groceries, and other foreign products. Mr. March, in his interesting work, "Daniel Webster and his Contemporaries," thus describes the scene between Daniel and his father:

"It was evening when he arrived. I have heard him tell the story of the interview. His

father was sitting before the fire, and received him with manifest joy. He looked feebler than he had ever appeared; but his countenance lighted up, on seeing his *clerk* stand before him in good health and spirits. He lost no time in alluding to the great appointment — said how spontaneously it had been made — how kindly the Chief Justice proposed it, and with what unanimity all assented. During this speech, it can well be imagined how embarrassed Mr. Webster felt, compelled, as he thought from a conviction of duty, to disappoint his father's sanguine expectations. Nevertheless, he commanded his countenance and voice, so as to reply in a sufficiently assured manner. He spoke gaily about the office; expressed his great obligation to their Honors, and his intention to write them a most respectful letter; if he could have consented to record any body's judgments, he should have been proud to have recorded their Honors'. He proceeded in this strain, till his father exhibited signs of amazement; it having occurred to him, at length, that his son might all the time be serious. 'Do you intend to decline this office?' he asked. 'Most certainly,' replied his son; 'I cannot think of doing otherwise. I





DANIEL WEBSTER DECLINES THE CLERKSHIP.

mean to use my tongue in the courts, not my pen; to be an actor, not a register of other men's actions.'

"For a moment, Judge Webster seemed angry. He rocked his chair slightly; a flash went over his eye, softened by age, but even then black as jet; but it immediately disappeared, and his countenance resumed its habitual serenity. Parental love and partiality could not, after all, but have been gratified with the son's devotion to an honorable and distinguished profession, and his evident confidence of success in it. 'Well, my son,' said the Judge, 'your mother has always said that you would come to something or nothing, she was not sure which. I think you are about settling that doubt for her.'"

In a few days, Daniel returned to Boston, and the subject was never again alluded to in the family. Mr. Webster says that his father's eyes were brimful of the tears of gratitude, as he spoke of the appointment; and that when he heard his son decline it, he could scarce believe his own ears. Before Mr. Webster left home, he had the satisfaction of giving his father the means to remove the mortgage, and to pay all the debts

which had been contracted on account of himself and his brother. The money came, as we have stated, in part from Mr. Emery, and in part from Daniel's earnings, and his brother's. He wrote a grateful and respectful letter to the judges, and felt that restored serenity which every one experiences when a troublesome question is determined.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Webster admitted to the Bar—Establishes himself in New Hampshire—His first cause—Death of his father—A son's testimony—The trial of a dumb depredator—Fourth of July Oration in 1806—Opinions of France—Relations of Agriculture and Commerce—Monthly Anthology—Mr. Webster's first criminal case—His fatiguing journeys—His abhorrence of affectation—Mode of addressing a jury—Admission to the Superior Court.

IN March, 1805, Mr. Gore moved the admission of his pupil, Daniel Webster, to practise at the Bar of the Court of Common Pleas, for Suffolk County. In introducing him, Mr. Gore spoke with emphasis of his remarkable talents and attainments, and confidently predicted his future eminence. The prediction had, no doubt, its influence in producing its own fulfilment; both by its stimulus upon the mind of the young lawyer, and by its weight upon those who heard, from Mr. Gore, a commendation much warmer than the mere course of professional courtesy would warrant or require.

Mr. Webster had resolved to establish himself in his native state. Local attachments and filial affection induced him to this determination; and perhaps he felt a natural diffidence, which led him to try his first practice in a narrower sphere than Boston, and to avail himself of his early friendships and connections. His Boston acquaintances and friends, hearing of Mr. Webster's intention to settle in New Hampshire, promised him their business; and as at that time there were many mercantile failures, Mr. Webster commenced at once a lucrative employment in the collection of debts. After he had been admitted to the Bar, he went from Boston to Amherst, where his father's court was in session, and returned home with him. His original purpose had been to settle in Portsmouth, that being the only seaport in the state, and the place of the principal commercial business. But the age of his father, then in his sixty-seventh year, determined Daniel to remain near him; and he opened an office in the neighboring village of Boscawen.

In September of the same year, 1805, Mr. Webster first appeared in court for the trial of a cause. His father was on the bench, and the court was held in Plymouth, then the county-seat

of Grafton. Among the members of the Bar present were Mr. Webster's old friend, Mr. Thompson, and several others to whom he had been in the habit of looking up with reverence and respect. The Sheriff of the court was Col. William Webster, a connection of the family, who had never seen Daniel Webster before, and who relates that he was ashamed to see so lean and feeble a young man come into court bearing the name of Webster. He thought when Mr. Webster rose, that he could not stand up long. His misgivings were soon dissipated, however, as the debutant had well prepared himself; and in this, his maiden speech, surprised the court, and caused confident auguries of his future eminence. It was such an introduction to the law-seeking public, as thereafter ensured him crowds of clients.

Mr. Webster's father died in the Spring following. Let us quote Mr. Webster's own language respecting him: "My father, Ezekiel Webster, was the handsomest man I ever saw, except my brother Ezekiel. He died in April, 1806. I neither left him nor forsook him. My opening an office at Boscawen was that I might be near him. I closed his eyes. He died at sixty-seven years of age, after a life of exertion, toil, and exposure;

a private soldier, an officer, a legislator, a judge; every thing a man could be, to whom learning 'never had disclosed her ample page.' My first speech at the bar was made when he was on the bench. He never heard me a second time. He had in him what I recollect to have been the character of some of the old Puritans. He was deeply religious, but not sour. On the contrary, good-humored and facetious, showing, even in his age, with a contagious laugh, teeth all as white as alabaster; gentle, soft, playful; and yet having a heart in him that he seemed to have borrowed from a lion. He could frown—a frown it was—but cheerfulness, good-humor, and smiles, composed his most usual aspect."

As throwing light on the character of father and children, we preserve the following anecdote of the early years of the two brothers, Ezekiel and Daniel. The incident is related by a correspondent of the Boston Traveller. The vegetables in the garden had suffered very much from the depredations of a woodchuck. Daniel, some ten or twelve years old, and his older brother Ezekiel, had set a trap, and succeeded in capturing the trespasser. Ezekiel proposed to kill the animal, and end at once all further trouble from him; but

Daniel looked with compassion on his meek, dumb captive, and offered to let him again go free. The boys could not agree, and each appealed to their father to decide the case. "Well, my boys," said the old gentleman, "I will be the Judge. There is the prisoner (pointing to the woodchuck) and you shall be the counsel, and plead the case for and against his life and liberty."

Ezekiel opened the case with a strong argument, urging the mischievous nature of the criminal, the great harm he had already done, said that much time and labor had been spent in his capture, and now, if he was suffered to live and go again at large, he would renew his depredations, and be cunning enough not to suffer himself to be caught again, and that he ought now to be put to death; that his skin was of some value, and that to make the most of him they could, it would not repay half the damage he had already done. His argument was ready, practical, to the point, and of much greater length than our limits will allow us to occupy in relating the story.

The father looked with pride upon his son, who became a distinguished jurist in his manhood. "Now, Daniel, it is your turn; I'll hear what you have to say."

'Twas his first case. Daniel saw that the plea of his brother had sensibly affected his father, the Judge; and as his large, brilliant black eyes looked upon the soft, timid expression of the animal, and as he saw it tremble with fear in its narrow prison-house, his heart swelled with pity, and he appealed with eloquent words that the captive might again go free. God, he said, had made the woodchuck; he made him to live, to enjoy the bright sunlight, the pure air, the free fields and woods. God had not made him, or anything, in vain; the woodchuck had as much right to live as any other living thing; he was not a destructive animal, as the wolf and the fox were; he simply ate a few common vegetables, of which they had a plenty, and could well spare a part; he destroyed nothing except the little food he needed to sustain his humble life; and that little food was as sweet to him, and as necessary to his existence, as was to them the food upon his mother's table. God furnished their own food; he gave them all they possessed; and would they not spare a little for the dumb creature, who really had as much right to his small share of God's bounty, as they themselves had to their portion? yea, more, the animal had never violated

the laws of his nature, or the laws of God, as man often did; but strictly followed the simple, harmless instincts he had received from the hand of the Creator of all things. Created by God's hand, he had a right, a right from God, to life, to food, to liberty; and they had no right to deprive him of either. He alluded to the mute but earnest pleadings of the animal for that life, as sweet, as dear to him, as their own was to them, and the just judgment they might expect if in selfish cruelty, and cold heartlessness, they took the life they could not restore again — the life that God alone had given.

During this appeal, the tears had started to the old man's eyes, and were fast running down his sun-burnt cheeks; every feeling of a father's heart was stirred within him; he saw the future greatness of his son before his eyes; he felt that God had blessed him in his children beyond the lot of common men; his pity and sympathy were awakened by the eloquent words of compassion, and the strong appeal for mercy; and forgetting the Judge in the man and the father, he sprang from his chair, (while Daniel was in the midst of his argument, without thinking he had already won his case,) and turning to his older son, dashing

the tears from his eyes, exclaimed, "ZEKE, ZEKE, YOU LET THAT WOODCHUCK GO!"

On the fourth of July, 1806, Mr. Webster was chosen by the people of Concord to deliver an oration. This, like the oration of 1800, is not included in Mr. Webster's published works, and we avail ourselves of the abstracts and extracts made by General Lyman, that our readers may compare it with his earlier performances. The subject of the speech was the possibility of preserving the present form of our government, the solitary representative of republican institutions. "When we speak," said Mr. Webster, "*of preserving the Constitution*, we mean not the paper on which it is written, but the spirit which dwells in it. Government may lose all of its real character, its genius, its temper, without losing its appearance. Republicanism, unless you guard it, will creep out of its case of parchment, like a snake out of its skin. You may have a Despotism under the name of a Republic. You may look on a government and see it possess all the external modes of Freedom, and yet find nothing of the essence, the vitality of Freedom in it; just as you may contemplate an embalmed body, where oil hath preserved proportion and form,

and nerves without motion, and veins void of blood."

Among the most dangerous enemies of our government, he instanced the passions and vices of the people. But considering that evil communications corrupt systems as well as individuals, he enlarged on the dangers which threatened its well-being from its foreign relations. Intimately connected as was our country with foreign nations by commerce, which, from its nature, cannot exist without rivalry, he inferred the necessity and policy of granting it a protection sufficient to defend it from the interruptions and aggressions which the spirit of rivalry, and the injustice of other nations may dispose them to infer. The want of protection to commerce will be more fatal to our agriculture than either the drought or the mildew; for in this instance, were it left to our choice, we should certainly imitate the conduct of David, by choosing "to fall into the hands of the Lord (for his mercies are great), and not to fall into the hands of men."

The following sketch of the character of the French empire will be read with interest, as coming from a strong mind, contemporary with the events on which it dwelt.

“We seem to be carried back to the Roman age. The days of Cæsar are come again. Even a greater than Cæsar is here. The throne of the Bourbons is now filled by a new character of the most astonishing fortunes. A new dynasty hath taken place in Europe. A new era hath commenced. An empire is founded, more populous, more energetic, more warlike, more powerful, than Ancient Rome, at any moment of her existence. The basis of this mighty fabric covers France, Holland, Spain, Prussia, Italy, and Germany; embracing perhaps an eighth part of the population of the globe.

“Though this Empire is commercial in some degree and in some parts, its ruling passion is not commerce but war. Its genius is conquest, its ambition is fame. With all the immorality, the licentiousness, the prodigality, the corruption of declining Rome, it has the enterprise, the courage, the ferocity, of Rome in the days of the Consuls. While the French Revolution was acting, it was difficult to speak of France without exciting the rancor of political party. The cause in which the leaders professed to be engaged, was too dear to American hearts to suffer their motives to be questioned, or their excesses censured with just

severity. But the Revolutionary drama is now closed—the curtain hath fallen on those tremendous scenes, which, for fourteen years, held the eye of the world—that meteor which, ‘from its horrid hair shook pestilence and war,’ hath now passed off into the distant regions of space, and left us to speculate coolly on the causes of its appearance.”

It will be perceived that, passing from boyhood to manhood in years, Mr. Webster had not changed his opinions in relation to France. His political preferences were strongly marked. At the time when Mr. Webster delivered this oration, the gun-boat policy of Mr. Jefferson had been brought forward, and the embargo hinted at, thus leaving foreign commerce undefended, and protecting by annihilating it. Mr. Webster’s political bias led him to strong opposition to any policy which should include the abandonment of protection to the naval interests. He reviewed the position of the United States in regard to both the great belligerents, Britain and France; and urged the importance of protecting the commercial interests of the country.

“Nothing is plainer,” he said, “than this: if we will have commerce, we must protect it. This country is commercial as well as agricultural.

Indissoluble bonds connect him who ploughs the land with him who ploughs the sea. Nature has placed us in a situation favorable to commercial pursuits, and no government can alter the destination. Habits confirmed by two centuries are not to be changed. An immense portion of our property is on the waves. Sixty or eighty thousand of our most useful citizens are there, and are entitled to such protection from the government as their case requires."

Thus, though Mr. Webster had at this time no thoughts of becoming a politician, we find him honestly exhibiting his political preferences, and exhibiting the opinions of which at no distant period, he was to become the public champion. He was attentive to his profession, and not neglectful of his literary tastes and avocations. From his quiet office in Boscawen he furnished articles for the *Monthly Anthology*, published at Cambridge, and supported by the pens of the most distinguished American writers of that day. It was edited by his old Phillips Academy friend and fellow-student, Joseph Stevens Buckminster; and in this field Mr. Webster could give free scope to his brilliant imagination.

The second effort of Mr. Webster at the bar

was the defence of a man arraigned for murder. He was not yet admitted to practice in the court in which the man was tried; and perhaps the case was one of guilt so obvious that only the custom of the court made the assignment of counsel necessary. The murder was foul and horrid, perpetrated on an innocent man; a fellow prisoner for debt. They were in the same room, and no provocation was given by the victim which could in any degree palliate the offence. The fact of killing could not be questioned, and the defence was narrowed down to a single point, the insanity of the prisoner. This plea, while often least tenable in fact, gives scope for legal ingenuity in an inverse ratio to its basis. There were no proofs of the man's former insanity — but his malignity of disposition was notorious. Mr. Webster argued that the very enormity of the deed, perpetrated without any of the motives which operate upon most minds, furnished presumptive proof of the prisoner's alienation of mind; and even the cool deliberation and apparent serenity which he exhibited at the time the deed was done, were proofs that reason was perverted, and that a momentary insanity had seized him.

The court and jury were deeply interested in

the young advocate's masterly analysis of the human mind. He opened all the springs of action, and described and classed every faculty of the mind so lucidly and philosophically that it was a new school for those who heard him. He showed the different shapes insanity assumed, from a single current of false reasoning upon a particular subject, while there is a perfect soundness of mind upon every other; to the reasoning aright upon wrong premises and to the reasoning wrong upon right premises, up to those paroxysms of madness, when the eye is filled with strange sights, and the ear with strange sounds, and reason is entirely dethroned. As he laid open the infirmities of human nature, the jury were in tears and the bystanders were still more affected; but common sense prevailed over argument and eloquence, and the wretch was condemned and executed. The speech lost nothing of its effect upon the people by the decision of the jury, and was long the subject of conversation. It is much to be regretted that less eloquent pleas have often since defeated in our courts the ends of justice.

Mr. Webster's early career at the bar was attended with as much labor and unremitted study as his course through college had been.

Indeed, he graduated with a reputation which it was no small task to sustain. He might, as many other precocious students have done, have lived a short time upon his college laurels, and then have passed into oblivion. Life, with him, was an earnest struggle; and as a specimen of the physical endurance which he sustained, he stated to a friend that he had, during his early years as a lawyer, frequently, at sunset, put his saddle on his horse, and ridden fifty miles, to be present at the opening of court the next morning. On one occasion, after a toilsome series of days and nights, he was journeying on horseback, along a lonely road, when he fell into a profound study upon the merits of the case he was to argue the next morning. Long and tedious was the trial, as it proceeded in the chamber of his brain; when, just as the jury were to pronounce the verdict, a drop of water fell on his hand, and he awakened from sleep, comfortably seated under a tree, whither his horse had carried him. After this nap in the saddle, he hurried away, to finish, in his waking hours, the work he had done in his dream.

In the long years of Mr. Webster's legal practice, nearly half a century, it is stated that he was employed as junior counsel in not more than about

a dozen instances. He had, almost from the first, not so much a reputation to achieve, as to defend. Much was expected of him; and while other young practitioners were gaining experience in lesser cases, and inferior courts, Mr. Webster was thrown at once into a line of practice which required all his talents, and imposed upon him constant study. He always prepared himself with great industry and care—not relying upon his conscious powers, but supporting his eloquence by facts and precedents. He considered it an insult to his auditory, at all periods of his life, to come before them unprepared. He abhorred affectation—and most of all, the affectation of speaking on the spur of the moment, and without previous thought. A friend of his, in speaking of his habits and characteristics, says: “I have often thought, from my long acquaintance with Mr. Webster, that if other men could think as long, and as closely, and as profoundly, their public efforts would equal his; for I have never known a man in my life who made such preparation for what he had to say before the court, before the Senate, or before the people. He did not think he had any right to offer extemporaneous thoughts before a multitude of his fellow-citizens, no matter

who they were. He thought he was to dress himself in his best garments—that he was to appear and deliver his best thoughts, in his best style, to those who stood to hear him. And thence it happens that he always gave, in the course of his long life, thoughts which were the result of thorough preparation: the public came to understand that what Mr. Webster said was worth reading. Hence, what he did say was read more than the productions of any man who was his compeer in the country.”

In opening a case, he secured his jury by a plain, intelligible statement, using such clear and unadorned language as could not be mistaken, and thus gave evidence of his intention not to distort or to mislead. He gained their confidence before he appealed to their reason.

In May, 1807, Mr. Webster was admitted as attorney and counsellor of the Superior Court of New Hampshire; and in September he relinquished his office and practice in Boscawen to his brother Ezekiel, and removed to Portsmouth.

CHAPTER VIII.

The New Hampshire Bar — Mr. Webster and Jeremiah Mason — Professional Anecdotes—The Drilled Witness—Webster's Farm —Mr. Webster's Marriage—State of the Country and of Parties —New England Interests—The Bar as an Introduction to Public Life — Mr. Webster in "caucus"—Popular Enthusiasm —Mr. Webster's Professional Industry—His Habits of Early Rising — His Letter upon the Morning.

AMONG the distinguished men with whom Mr. Webster was brought into competition at the bar of the Superior Court of New Hampshire, were Jeremiah Mason, Edward St. Loe Livermore, William King Atkinson, and George Sullivan. Jeremiah Smith was Chief Justice of the State; and having been an early and attached friend of Mr. Webster's father, the son succeeded to his friendship. Samuel Dexter and Joseph Story, of Massachusetts, were occasional practitioners in the New Hampshire courts. To meet such men, Mr. Webster was obliged assiduously to prepare himself; and by close study to supply his lack of experience. He sounded his clients thoroughly,

and explored every point which the opposite party were likely to make; acquainting himself carefully with the weakness as well as the strength of his own side, and of the other. He was very rarely surprised by any new or unexpected testimony; and even though some unlooked-for development occurred, he betrayed no astonishment.

As Mr. Mason and Mr. Webster were the acknowledged heads of the bar, they were usually engaged in the same causes, and most generally opposed to each other. They travelled together, occupied apartments in the same house, and sat at the same table; by their friendly intercourse exciting the wonder of men, who could not comprehend how the two great advocates could deal such hard blows in argument, and still be warm friends. Mr. Mason died in 1849; and Mr. Webster, in a speech at the meeting of the Suffolk Bar, made the following allusion to their early and continued friendship: "The proprieties of this occasion compel me, with whatever reluctance, to refrain from the personal feelings which arise in my heart upon the death of one with whom I have cultivated a sincere, affectionate, and unbroken friendship, from the day that I commenced my own professional career, to the closing hour of

his life. I will not say, of the advantages which I have derived from his intercourse and conversation, all that Mr. Fox said of Edmund Burke; but I am bound to say, of my own professional discipline and attainments, whatever they may be, I owe much to that close attention to the discharge of my duties, which I was compelled to pay for nine successive years, from day to day, by Mr. Mason's efforts and arguments at the same bar. *Fas est ab hoste doceri*; and I must have been unintelligent indeed, not to have learned something from the constant displays of that power which I had so much occasion to see and to feel." While conversing upon his connection with Mr. Mason, Mr. Webster once said: "If any body should think me somewhat familiar with the law on some points, and should be curious enough to desire to know how it happened, tell him that Jeremiah Mason compelled me to study it. He was my master."

It is related that the first meeting of Mr. Webster with Jeremiah Mason, as opposing counsel, was in a criminal case. The person accused being a man of some note, great efforts were made to defend him; and Jeremiah Mason, as the most prominent member of the Portsmouth Bar, was

engaged for the defence. In the absence of the prosecuting attorney, Mr. Webster was delegated to conduct the prosecution for the State. The accused was acquitted; but Mr. Mason acknowledged the high, open, and manly ground taken by Mr. Webster. He did not resort to technicalities, but confined himself to the law and the facts, and commanded the high respect of bench and of bar.

An amusing anecdote of Mr. Webster's early professional career, as related by himself, is given in Lanman's "Private Life." "Soon after commencing the practice of my profession at Portsmouth," said Mr. Webster, "I was waited on by an old acquaintance of my father's, resident in an adjacent county, who wished to engage my professional services. Some years previous, he had rented a farm, with the clear understanding that he could purchase it, after the expiration of his lease, for one thousand dollars. Finding the farm productive, he soon determined to own it; and as he laid aside money for the purchase, he was tempted to improve what he felt certain he should possess. But his landlord, perceiving the property was greatly increased in value, coolly refused to receive the one thousand dollars, when, in due

time, it was presented; and when his extortionate demand of double that sum was refused, he at once brought an action of ejectment. The man had but the one thousand dollars, and an unblemished reputation; yet I willingly undertook his case.

“The opening argument of the plaintiff’s attorney left me little ground for hope. He stated that he could prove that my client hired the farm; but there was not a word in the lease about the sale, nor was there a word spoken about the sale when the lease was signed, as he could prove by a witness. In short, his was a clear case, and I left the court-room at dinner-time with feeble hopes of success. By chance I sat at table next a newly-commissioned militia officer, and a brother lawyer began to joke him about his lack of military knowledge. ‘Indeed,’ he jocosely remarked, ‘you should write down the orders, and get old W—— to beat them into your scone, as I saw him this morning with a paper in his hand, teaching something to young M—— in the courthouse entry.’ Can it be, thought I, that old W——, the plaintiff in the case, was instructing young M——, who was his reliable witness?

“After dinner the court was reöpened, and

M—— was put on the stand. He was examined by the plaintiff's counsel, and certainly told a clear, plain story, repudiating all knowledge of any agreement to sell. When he had concluded, the opposite counsel, with a triumphant glance, turned to me, and asked me if I was satisfied. 'Not quite,' I replied.

"I had noticed a piece of paper protruding from M——'s pocket, and hastily approaching him, I seized it, before he had the least idea of my intention. 'Now,' I asked, 'tell me if this paper does not detail the story you have so clearly told, and if it is not all false?' The witness hung down his head with shame; and when the paper was found to be what I had supposed, and in the very hand-writing of old W——, he lost his case at once. Nay, there was such a storm of indignation against him, that he soon removed to the West.

"Years afterwards, visiting New Hampshire, I was the guest of my professional brethren at a public dinner; and towards the close of the festivities, I was asked if I would solve a great doubt by answering a question. 'Certainly.' 'Well then, Mr. Webster, we have often wondered how you knew what was in M——'s pocket!'"

Another anecdote of Mr. Webster's professional life in Portland is characteristic of the man. One of his clients, after gaining a certain suit, found himself unable to pay his lawyer, and insisted upon deeding to him a piece of land, situated in a neighboring county. So, for some years the matter rested, until, happening to be in the neighborhood, it occurred to Mr. Webster to look up his property. He found an old woman living upon it alone, in an old house among the rocks. He questioned the old lady about the farm, and was told that it was the property of a lawyer named Webster, and that she was daily expecting him to come and turn her out of doors. Mr. Webster made himself known, assured her that she need not fear any such summary process, made her a liberal present, and took his departure; not, however, till he had made her glad by accepting her humble hospitality. The place is still known as "Webster's Farm," but it is believed that he never took formal possession of the property.

Mr. Webster was now in a position to settle himself in life, and he was united in marriage with Grace Fletcher, a young lady who had been admitted to a share in his hopes and plans, long

before they had attained that definiteness which they now possessed. She was about his own age, and lived to share many of his successes, and to verify the truth of their young hopes in the fame of her husband.

From the complexion of Mr. Webster's early orations, specimens of which we have given, the reader has perceived that he had decided political opinions, and a manly way of expressing them. The early part of the present century was marked by much greater excitement upon political subjects than we have witnessed since. There may have been less printing and publishing, but there was deeper feeling, for more was at stake. The policy and powers of the government had not been settled. Many questions which are now determined by precedent, had then to be decided for the first time. And, in the decision, mere abstractions were not the points at stake, but the wealth and prosperity of the people and the very existence of the government. The great European powers, at war with each other, were disposed to treat this country as a mere colonial dependency of Europe, and to decide upon international rights and questions without recognising her existence as a power among the nations of the earth. Hon.

Edward Everett, in his memoir of Daniel Webster, thus sketches the position of the nation and of the parties within it.

“The politics of the country were in such a state, that there was scarcely any course which could be pursued with entire satisfaction by a patriotic young man, sagacious enough to penetrate behind mere party names and to view public questions in their true light. Party spirit ran high; errors had been committed by ardent men on both sides; and extreme opinions had been advanced on most questions, which no wise and well-informed person at the present day would be willing to espouse. The United States, though not actually drawn to any great length into the vortex of the French Revolution, were powerfully affected by it. The deadly struggle of the two great European belligerents, in which the neutral rights of this country were grossly violated by both, gave a complexion to our domestic politics. A change of administration, mainly resulting from difference of opinion in respect to our foreign relations, had taken place in 1801. If we may consider President Jefferson’s inaugural address as the indication of the principles on which he intended to conduct his administration, it was his purpose to take a new departure, and

to disregard the former party divisions. ‘We have,’ said he, in that eloquent state paper, ‘called by different names, brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans, we are all federalists.’

“At the time these significant expressions were uttered, Mr. Webster, at nineteen, was just leaving college, and preparing to embark on the voyage of life. A sentiment so liberal was not only in accordance with the generous temper of youth, but highly congenial with the spirit of enlarged patriotism which has ever guided his public course. There is certainly no individual who has filled a prominent place in our political history, who has shown himself more devoted to principle, and less to party. While no man has clung with greater tenacity to the friendships which spring from agreement in political opinions, no man has been less disposed to find in these associations an instrument of monopoly or exclusion in favor of individuals, interests, or sections of the country.

“But, however catholic may have been the intentions and wishes of Mr. Jefferson, events both at home and abroad were too strong for him, and defeated that policy of blending the two great parties into one, which has always been a favorite—perhaps we may add a visionary project—with

statesmen of elevated and generous characters. The aggressions of the belligerents on our neutral commerce still continued; and, by the joint effect of the French Berlin and Milan Decrees, and the British Orders in Council, it was all but swept from the ocean. In this state of things, two courses were open to the United States as a growing neutral power: one, that of prompt resistance to the aggressive policy of the belligerents; the other, that which was called the 'restrictive system,' which consisted in an embargo on our own vessels, with a view to withdraw them from the grasp of the foreign cruisers, and in laws inhibiting commercial intercourse with England and France. There was a division of opinion in the cabinet of Mr. Jefferson, and in the country at large. The latter policy was finally adopted. It fell in with the general views of Mr. Jefferson, against committing the country to the risks of a foreign war. His administration was also strongly pledged to retrenchment and economy; in the pursuit of which a portion of our little navy had been brought to the hammer, and a species of shore defence substituted, which can now be thought of only with mortification and astonishment.

“Although the discipline of party was suffi-

ciently strong to cause this system of measures to be adopted and pursued for years, it was never cordially approved by the people of the United States of any party. Leading republicans, both at the South and the North, denounced it. With Mr. Jefferson's retirement from office, it fell rapidly into disrepute. It continued, however, to form the basis of our party divisions, till the war of 1812. In these divisions, as has been intimated, both parties were in a false position; the one supporting and forcing upon the country a system of measures not cordially approved of even by themselves; the other, a powerless minority, zealously opposing those measures, but liable for that reason to be thought backward in asserting the neutral rights of the country. Among these, mature beyond his years, was Mr. Webster."

We have already quoted, from his Concord oration, his strong arguments in favor of cherishing and defending the commercial interests of the United States. New England was deeply interested in commerce. New Hampshire, with its one sea-port, has in its coat-of-arms a ship on the stocks. The active industry of New England, without the agricultural facilities of other States, was necessarily drawn into commerce and the

fisheries. The commercial restrictions which preceded the war, fell heavily upon this portion of the confederacy; and it is asking too much of any community, however patriotic, to demand their hearty approval and advocacy of measures which, if they benefit the country, do it at the expense of a portion of the citizens. There is always a choice of measures; and it is entirely too harsh a judgment to say of those who prefer one course above another, that they are necessarily deficient in patriotism, because they elect that political course which would do them least injury.

The Bar has usually been, in the United States, the best introduction to public life. The talents and eloquence of lawyers become matters of public notoriety. Parties are anxious to secure the aid of talent. Governments invite its co-operation and assistance. The people at large expect and demand that the powers which are exhibited for a fee, in the cases of individuals before the courts, should be heard for love of country, in behalf of the nation; and the natural and necessary ambition of men who are conscious of intellectual gifts, and who derive mental nourishment from the excitement of admiration, predisposes them to listen to these calls. We are not to wonder, then,

that Mr. Webster was early drawn into politics. There is a sympathy between that science and the science of law—if indeed they may not more properly be treated as different branches of the same subject. But while party spirit ran high, and amounted in many cases to personal bitterness, it is but justice to Mr. Webster to say that in this respect, throughout his whole life, he kept a watch upon himself; and his course is unmarked by the personal quarrels which have been the unfortunate incidents in the lives of many other statesmen.

When he entered the political arena, it was at once to be acknowledged as a leader. It was a tribute to his commanding talents; for he never resorted to the arts which designing men practise to obtain popular favor. Indeed, in this respect he did less to conciliate and win general affection than would have been perfectly allowable. He was direct and bold, coming openly to what he designed to say, without circumlocution, without evasion, and without flattery.

Mr. Webster was one of the leading spirits in many political gatherings in and near Portsmouth. We shall not particularise, but present, from the account of a witness, an idea of his manner and

his subject matter. The writer says that he was travelling through Portsmouth, and was about to leave the place. His carriage had been brought to the inn door, when the hostler said, "Sir, are you going away? Mr. Webster is to speak to-night." The gentleman, having heard this before from others, his equals, and finding even the hostler at the inn the admirer of Mr. Webster, determined to wait, and see and hear for himself this man who could win "golden opinions from all sorts of people." He went early to the Hall where the meeting was to be held, and found it already filled to overflowing. Courtesy to a stranger, joined, perhaps, to a natural pride in their townsmen, induced members of the crowd to give way, and leave him room to stand.

A tremendous noise soon announced that the orator had arrived; but upon the organization of the meeting, several gentlemen preceded Mr. Webster. They were listened to with polite apathy, but the enthusiasm of the crowd was reserved for Daniel Webster. When he arose at length, it was some moments before the cheering would permit him to be heard. When order was restored, he went on with great serenity and ease

with his remarks, without making the slightest effort to command applause.

The audience quietly listened. Now and then there were murmurs of approbation, which indicated that the crowd needed only some one to set the example, to break out into applause. But every indication of such a demonstration was repressed, that all might hear; and when the speech closed, the pent-up enthusiasm broke out in long and heart-felt demonstrations of admiration. The speech was strong, gentlemanly, and appropriate, but without a spark of the demagogue in it. The gentleman whose impressions we are recording, says that the most remarkable fact to him was that a promiscuous audience should have had the good taste to relish sound, close reasoning, in a place where vague declamation is usually received with most favor.

But while thus interested in public concerns, Mr. Webster was still indefatigable in his professional pursuits. The secret by which he accomplished so much, may be gathered from the following reminiscence, given by a legal gentleman in Providence, in an address in honor of his memory.

“I had directions from a client, in 1818 or

1819, to consult him upon a case of some importance, a case in which were presented numerous cross-questions of law and equity, so ensnared and entangled, that it required days and weeks of hard labor to discover a channel-way over its shoals and amid its rocks. I called on Mr. Webster on the evening of my arrival in Boston, and stated the case. He saw its difficulties, and observed that the early morning was the period for such a labor, and requested me to meet him in his study at an early hour, which I accordingly did.

“Before the hour of dinner he had threaded all the avenues and cross-paths of the labyrinth, and he gave an opinion so clear and so comprehensive, that at the dinner-table I was induced to ask him what had been his system of mental culture. He gave me an outline, and the reasons in support of it. It was this—that so far as training was concerned, the system which experience had shown to be most conducive to physical, was equally conducive to mental power. That the training in both cases should be the same. That it was a law of our natures, that the body or the mind that labored constantly must necessarily labor moderately. He instanced the race-horse, which

by occasional efforts, in which all its power is exerted, followed by periods of entire rest, would in time add very largely to its speed; and the great walkers or runners of our own race, who from small beginnings, when fifteen or twenty miles a day fatigued them, would in the end walk off fifty miles at the rate of five or six miles an hour. I think that he also mentioned the London porter, who at first staggering under a load of 150 or 200 pounds, would in time walk off with six or eight hundred pounds with apparent ease. The same law governs the mind. When employed at all, all its powers should be exerted to its utmost. Its fatigue should be followed by its entire rest. He stated that he was generally in his study at five in the morning; that whatever mental occupation employed him, he put out all his power; and when his mental vision began to be obscure, he ceased entirely, and resorted to some amusement or light business as a relaxation. I remember distinctly his quotation from Chesterfield: "Do one thing at a time; and whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well."

Many write and talk eloquently of the morning, who have no practical knowledge of its beauties and its salubrity. Mr. Webster acted as well as

wrote. We subjoin here a letter written by him several years ago, and dated at Richmond, at five o'clock on a Spring morning.

“My dear Friend : — Whether it be a favor or an annoyance, you owe this letter to my early habits of rising. From the hour marked at the top of this page, you will naturally conclude that my companions are not now engaging my attention, as we have not calculated on being early travellers to-day.

“This city has a pleasant seat. It is high ; the James River runs below it ; and when I went out, an hour ago, nothing was heard but the roar of the Falls. The air is tranquil, and its temperature mild. It is morning, and a morning sweet and fresh, and delightful. Every body knows the morning in its metaphorical sense, applied to so many occasions. The health, strength, and beauty of early years, lead us to call that period the ‘morning of life.’ Of a lovely young woman, we say she is ‘bright as the morning,’ and no one doubts why Lucifer is called ‘son of the morning.’

“But the morning itself, few people, inhabitants of cities, know any thing about. Among all our good people, not one in a thousand sees the sun rise once in a year. They know nothing of the

morning. Their idea of it is, that it is that part of the day which comes along after a cup of coffee, or a piece of toast. With them morning is not a new issuing of light, a new bursting forth of the sun, a new waking up of all that has life from a sort of temporary death, to behold again the works of God, the heavens and the earth; it is only a part of the domestic day, belonging to reading the newspapers, answering notes, sending the children to school, and giving orders for dinner. The first streak of light, the earliest purpling of the East, which the lark springs up to greet, and the deeper and deeper coloring into orange and red, till at length the 'glorious sun is seen, regent of day'—this they never enjoy, for they never see it.

"Beautiful descriptions of morning abound in all languages, but they are the strongest, perhaps, in the East, where the sun is frequently the object of worship. King David speaks of taking to himself 'the wings of the morning.' This is highly poetical and beautiful. The wings of the morning are the beams of the rising sun. It is thus said that the sun of righteousness shall arise 'with healing in his wings'—a rising that shall scatter life, and health, and joy, throughout the Universe. Milton has fine descriptions of morn-

ing, but not so many as Shakspeare, from whose writings pages of the most beautiful imagery, all founded on the glory of morning, might be fulfilled.

“I never thought that Adam had much the advantage of us, from having seen the world while it was new. The manifestations of the power of God, like His mercies, are ‘new every morning,’ and fresh every moment. We see as fine risings of the sun as Adam ever saw; and its risings are as much a miracle now as they were in his day, and I think a good deal more; because it is now a part of the miracle that for thousands and thousands of years he has come to his appointed time, without the variation of a millionth part of a second. Adam could not tell how this might be. I know the morning—I am acquainted with it, and I love it. I love it fresh and sweet as it is—a daily new creation, breaking forth and calling all that have life, and breath, and being, to new adoration, new enjoyments, and new gratitude.”

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. Webster a Candidate for Congress — His account of his Services in the State Logislature — Mr. Webster elected Representative from New Hampshire — Appointed a Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs — Mr. Webster's First Speech — Resolution of Inquiry relative to the Berlin and Milan Decrees — Character and Impression of Mr. Webster's Speech — Remarks upon the Navy and the Embargo — Loss of Mr. Webster's House by Fire — Re-elected to Congress — Position of the Country after the War — Attitude of the South towards a Tariff — Mr. Webster's Course on the Bank and Tariff Questions — Death of Mr. Webster's Mother.

IN 1812, Mr. Webster having reached thirty years, the age which the Constitution requires, was brought forward by his friends as a candidate for Representative from New Hampshire, in the National Legislature. His whole public life has been spent in the service of the United States. In allusion to this subject, he said in a speech to the citizens of Syracuse, N. Y. :

“It has so happened that all the public services which I have rendered in the world, in my day and generation, have been connected with the

general government. I think I ought to make an exception. I was ten days a member of the Massachusetts Legislature (laughter), and I turned my thoughts to the search of some good object in which I could be useful in that position; and after much reflection, I introduced a bill which, with the general consent of both Houses of the Massachusetts Legislature, passed into a law, and is now a law of the State, which enacts that no man in the State shall catch trout in any other than the old way, with an ordinary hook and line. (Great laughter.) With that exception, I never was connected, for an hour, with any State government in my life. I never held office, high or low, under any State government. Perhaps that was my misfortune.

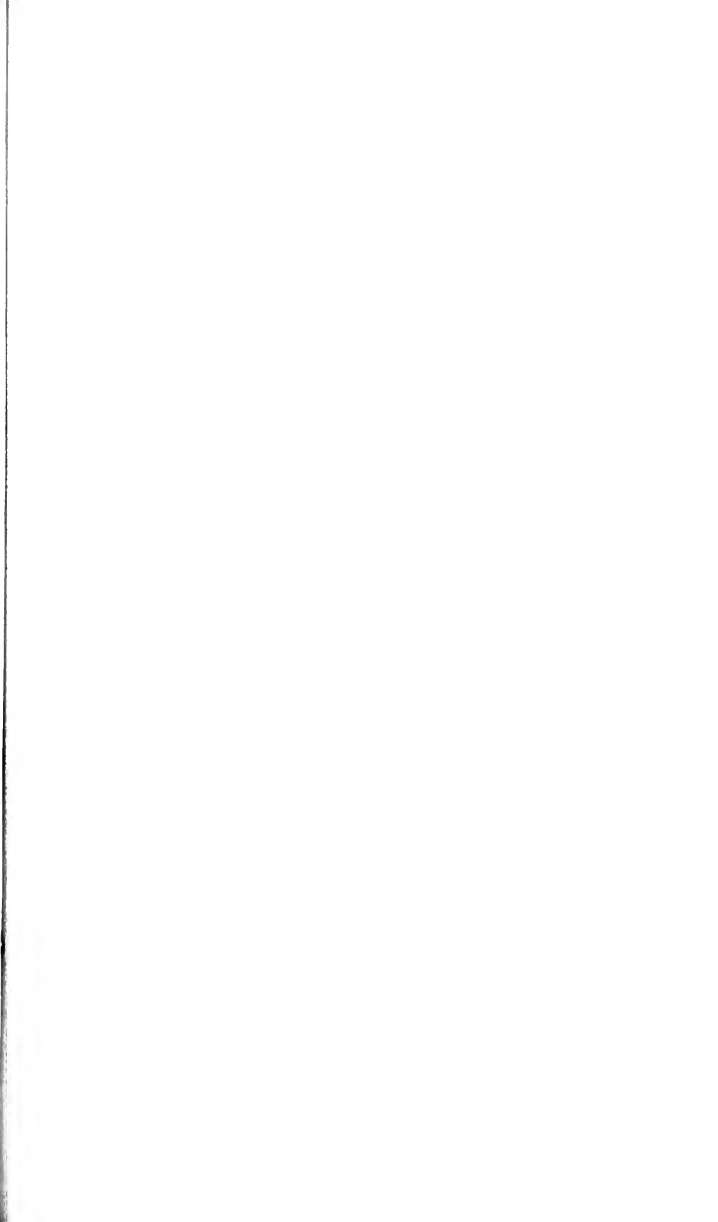
“At the age of thirty I was in New Hampshire practising law, and had some clients. John Taylor Gilman, who for fourteen years was governor of the State, thought that, a young man as I was, I might be fit to be an Attorney General of the State of New Hampshire, and he nominated me to the Council; and the Council, taking it in their deep consideration, and not happening to be of the same politics as the governor and myself, voted, three to one, that I

was not competent, and very likely they were right. (Laughter.) So you see, gentlemen, I never gained promotion under any State government."

The people, however, thought that Mr. Webster was fit to represent his native State in Congress. The ticket upon which his name led was elected by a majority of from two to three thousand. The contest was close. The election was then by "general ticket," all the names being placed on one ballot, and the vote of the whole State requiring to be ascertained, before it could be known who was elected. Those were not the days of railroads and magnetic telegraphs, and suspense played with the fears and hopes of those who felt an interest in the the contest. When at length it was ascertained that the "Federal ticket," on which Mr. Webster's name was borne, was elected, the rejoicings of the townsmen and immediate constituents was very great. It was unquestionably a great triumph to Mr. Webster; and his brother Ezekiel shared his pleasure. Joseph, the waggish brother, who would by this have perceived that Daniel was admitted to "know as much as do the rest of his family," died two years previously. He was a genial and

kind-hearted man, and his brothers deeply lamented him.

Col. Samuel L. Knapp, one of the earliest biographers of Mr. Webster, thus speaks of his personal character and opinions upon his entrance into public life. "Fully persuaded of the true course, he followed it with so much firmness and principle, that sometimes his serenity was taken by the furious and headstrong as apathy; but when a fair legitimate opportunity offered, he came out with such strength and manliness, that the doubting were satisfied, and the complaining silenced. In the worst of times, and in the darkest hour, he had faith in the redeeming qualities of the people. They might be wrong; but he saw into their true character sufficiently to believe that they would never remain permanently in error. In some of his conversations upon the subject, he compared the people in their management of national affairs to that of the sagacious and indefatigable raftsmen on his own Merrimack, who had falls and shoals to contend with on their way to the ocean; guiding skilfully and fearlessly over the former, between rocks and through breaks, and when reaching the sand-banks, jumping off into the water with lever, axe, and oar, and then





WEBSTER EXPOUNDING THE CONSTITUTION.

pushing, cutting, and directing, till they made all go, to the astonishment of those looking on.

Mr. Webster took his seat in Congress at the extra session of 1813. He had prepared himself for his post as a legislator, as he was accustomed always to prepare himself for any new position, by careful examination of the duties it would impose, their nature, and his capacity for them. Mr. Clay, one of the great leaders of the war party, had come into the House upon that impulse, and was elected Speaker by a large majority. Mr. Webster, the known representative of a different interest, was by the Speaker placed upon the Committee on Foreign Affairs, at such a juncture the most important committee in the House. His fellow-members were Calhoun, Grundy, Jackson of Virginia, and Ingersoll and Fish of New York. Whether this appointment was the consequence of some rumors of his talents, then little known in Washington, and entirely untried everywhere, as a legislator, or whether Mr. Clay, bound in courtesy to give New England a voice, chose Mr. Webster as a new member, and not obnoxious from any previous Congressional passages, it is impossible to say. Undoubtedly, both reasons had their weight.

Mr. Webster's first speech in Congress was made in introducing a series of resolutions, requesting the President to inform the House when, and by whom, and in what manner the first intelligence of the repeal of the Decrees of Berlin and Milan was given to the government of the United States. The object of these resolutions was to elicit a communication on this subject from the Executive which would unfold the proximate causes of the war with Great Britain, so far as they were connected with these decrees. No full report of this, Mr. Webster's maiden speech in Congress, has ever been published. The resolutions involved nice points of inquiry, and produced a long debate—an event unforeseen and undesired by Mr. Webster. The first Orders in Council of Great Britain, were issued in retaliation for the Berlin Decree of Napoleon. The French answered by the Milan Decree, and the British retaliated by further Orders in Council. The operation of both was to destroy the commerce of neutrals altogether; for while the English decrees made vessels liable to seizure which did not touch at a British port and obtain what amounted to a new clearance, the French decree "denationalised" all vessels which submitted to any such recognition of British supre-

macy. Between the two fires, neutral commerce could not fail to be destroyed. The British Orders were conditional in their operation, ceasing upon the revocation of the French decrees; and one of the causes of complaint against Great Britain was, that the Berlin and Milan Decrees were repealed, while Great Britain still refused to rescind the Orders in Council. The American diplomatists insisted that the French decrees had ceased to exist; but the French Government failed to supply any proof of the fact, until after war was actually declared between the United States and Great Britain. Then, a document bearing a previous date was produced. Everything, even to this day, is involved in doubt, except the fact that the two belligerents, in their war of annoyance against each other, cared nothing about the United States or their commerce; and the farther fact that the French Government did not hesitate to employ falsehoods, evasions, and forged state papers, by which an unsatisfactory and half-way revocation of her Orders was procured from Great Britain—the administration of that country yielding it with about as good a grace as a man would pay a check which he had strong suspicions was counterfeit.

No full report of Mr. Webster's speech has been preserved. We gather, from extemporaneous accounts, that he placed in juxtaposition the conflicting statements and evidence. The response to the resolutions, after they had been the subject of several weeks' debate, was a full report to the House of all that they called for, the majority for their passage being large. The debate was not so much upon the expediency of the resolutions, as upon the general subject. It took a wide range; but after his opening speech, Mr. Webster did not address the House upon the subject.

Mr. March, who has carefully collated the newspaper reports, and the reminiscences of those who were present at Daniel Webster's first appearance as a parliamentary orator, gives a graphic and animated account of it. Mr. Webster displayed a cautious regard for facts, a philosophical moderation of tone, a fulness of knowledge, and an aptness of historical illustration, which astonished the House. There was no exaggeration of statement or argument—no sophistry or uncalled-for rhetoric. Upon the subject of international law, he was well read; and the science which so few country lawyers would have thought it necessary to become proficient in, now stood

him in great stead. The oldest parliamentarian could not have exhibited more propriety and decency of manner and language, nor the most able logic been more perspicacious and convincing. There was a harmony between his thought and its expression, that won attention, and compelled admiration. His opening was simple, unaffected, and without pretension; gradually gaining the confidence of his audience by its transparent sincerity, and freedom from any attempt at display. As the orator continued, and grew animated, his words became more fluent, and his language more nervous; a crowd of thoughts seemed rushing upon him, all eager for utterance. He held them, however, under the command of his mind, as greyhounds with a leash, till he reached the close of his speech, when, warmed by the previous restraint, he poured them all forth, one after another, in glowing language.

The speech took the House by surprise, not so much from its eloquence, as from the vast amount of historical knowledge and illustrative ability displayed in it. How a person, untrained to forensic contests, and unused to public affairs, could exhibit so much parliamentary tact, such nice appreciation of the difficulties of a difficult

question, and such quiet facility in surmounting them, puzzled the mind. The youth and inexperience of the speaker had prepared the House for no such performance, and astonishment for a time subdued the expression of admiration.

As in previous cases where Mr. Webster had appeared in an arena new to him, he at once took his position among the first. It may probably be safely said that no other member, before or since, ever made so profound an impression in an opening speech. Members left their seats, and stood or sat in front of him; and when it was over many went up and congratulated the orator. Chief-Justice Marshall, who was among his hearers, says: "I did not at that time know Mr. Webster, but I was so much struck with the speech, that I did not hesitate then to state that Mr. Webster was a very able man, and would become one of the very first statesman in America; perhaps the very first."

It was during Mr. Webster's service in the thirteenth Congress, that Mr. Lowndes made of him the remark which, by its terseness and strength, became everywhere familiar. "The North has not his equal, nor the South his superior." He did not intrude himself into every debate, but

wisely reserved his powers for the subjects which he had well considered, and in which he felt the deepest interest. We have already indicated his feelings upon the subject of commerce and an increase of the navy. While not an advocate of the war, and particularly opposed to the mode in which it was conducted, and the policy of the government, he never refused his vote to any measure for the defence of the country. His freedom from the bitterness of party spirit prevented his partaking in the extravagance which was exhibited on both sides by men of greater zeal and less prudence. There are no such fiery passages in his speeches, no such heated personal attacks as mar the pleasure with which we look over the earlier speeches of Henry Clay. We present some extracts from his speeches on the increase of the navy, and the true policy of our country, as it was afterwards vindicated by our gallant navy.

“The humble aid,” he said, “which it would be in my power to render to measures of Government, shall be given cheerfully, if Government will pursue measures which I can conscientiously support. If even now, failing in an honest and sincere attempt to procure an honorable peace, it will return to

measures of defence and protection, such as reason and common sense and the public opinion all call for, my vote shall not be withheld from the means. Give up your futile projects of invasion. Extinguish the fires which blaze on your inland frontiers. Establish perfect safety and defence there by adequate force. Let every man that sleeps on your soil sleep in security. Stop the blood that flows from the veins of unarmed yeomanry and women and children. Give to the living time to bury and lament their dead, in the quietness of private sorrow. Having performed this work of beneficence and mercy on your inland borders, turn and look with the eye of justice and compassion on your vast population along the coast. Unclench the iron grasp of your embargo. Take measures for that end before another sun sets upon you. With all the war of the enemy upon your commerce, if you would cease to make war upon it yourselves, you would still have some commerce. That commerce would give you some revenue. Apply that revenue to the augmentation of your navy. That navy in turn will protect your commerce. Let it no longer be said, that not one ship of force, built by your hands since the war, yet floats upon the ocean. Turn the current of your

efforts into the channel which public sentiment has already worn broad and deep to receive it. A naval force, competent to defend your coasts against considerable armaments, to convoy your trade and perhaps raise the blockade of your rivers, is not a chimera. It may be realized. If, then, the war must continue, go to the ocean. If you are seriously contending for maritime rights, go to the theatre where alone those rights can be defended. Thither every indication of your future points you. There the united wishes and exertions of the nation will go with you. Even our party divisions, acrimonious as they are, cease at the water's edge. They are lost in attachment to the national character, on the element where that character is made respectable. In protecting naval interests by naval means, you well arm yourselves with the whole power of national sentiment, and may command the whole abundance of the national resources. In time you may be able to redress injuries in the place where they may be offered; and, if need be, to accompany your own flag, throughout the world, with the protection of your own cannon."

While Mr. Webster was in Washington, in the winter of 1813-14, his house took fire, and was

entirely burned, with nearly all its contents. Upon his first bringing his wife to Portsmouth, in 1808, he took lodgings in the house of a widow lady, and at length purchased of her the dwelling and furniture. He had just completed the payment when this misfortune occurred, and the loss was a total one, inasmuch as Mr. Webster was uninsured. Thus were swept away the young lawyer's savings from the nine or ten years of a laborious, but not very lucrative, pursuit of his profession in New Hampshire. And there were some losses which money could not replace—his manuscript collections and library. This disaster confirmed the purpose which he had commenced to entertain, of removing his residence to a wider field, where the increase of his profession would bear a more satisfactory proportion to his labors. But the execution of this intention was for some time delayed. The intervals between the Congressional sessions he devoted to assiduous attention to his legal duties.

In 1814, he was reëlected to Congress, the term commencing on the 4th of March next following. The bitterness of party feeling had now abated. The war was over; the successes of the gallant little United States navy, and the victory of

General Jackson at New Orleans, had comforted the national pride, bitterly wounded by the disastrous commencement of the contest. The war party were thus spared the taunts of excited opponents, which, in the early stages of hostilities, were bitter enough; and, on the other hand, the national exultation was sufficiently checked by the disastrous result of the Canadian invasion, and the destruction of the public buildings at Washington. There could not have been better consequences than this war produced. There was not that unmixed success in its prosecution which would have fostered the war-spirit, so fatal to the virtue and happiness of any country, and particularly unfitted to the genius and character of republican institutions. And on the other hand, the nation, still in its infancy, had demonstrated by its manly struggles that it would not submit to the fate which commercial usage had until then imposed upon nations of secondary power. The history of the world before this time had shown that the smaller powers must rank themselves as allies of one or the other party, when the greater nations choose to go to war; or that, in default of such active participation, they must submit to be the prey of both belligerents; and

without the power of successful resistance, be used, now by one and now by the other, as a portion of their material of war. This was the manner in which Britain and France undertook to deal with America. According to all precedent in the history of the world, they considered the United States only as a means of mutual annoyance, without the slightest regard to the interest, honor, or desires of the the Americans in the matter. It was only a few men of leading minds in the United States, like Webster and some of his compeers, who could discern the true question at stake. The others, and the newspaper politicians and small caucus statesmen especially, mutually accused, and in too many cases, bitterly reviled each other as partisans of England or of France. They discerned no other course which the nation could take, than to become the adherent of one side or the other. Mr. Webster, as early as 1800, as the reader may perceive by referring to his Hanover oration, repudiated the secondary place in which such narrow views would have fixed his native land, and scorned the idea that this continent must be regarded as a satellite to the other. The bitterness of party spirit, which, during the war and the years preceding it, seemed

to threaten the very existence of the confederacy, was among the causes which preserved it. A cordial unanimity in enmity to either of the great European powers would have made this country the vassal of the other. The divisions which existed prevented this. England was warred against — France was not fraternised with. The dominant party in the nation produced the one course — the sturdy and talented opposition party guarded against the other.

With the restoration of peace in Europe, party spirit subsided in America. In the Fourteenth Congress, men met to discuss questions which were not, at that time, subjects of such sectional feeling as they have since become. The leading measures which were brought forward, were a national bank, internal improvement, and a protective tariff. The Bank was a Pennsylvania measure; the others were the favorite policy of Southern members, who have since so zealously arrayed themselves in opposition. In relation to the subject of a National Bank, it is to be noted that when it was proposed, previous to Mr. Webster's election to Congress, to re-charter the first United States Bank, all the Republicans voted against it, and all the Federalists, with whom Mr.

Webster acted, voted in its favor. When the subject came up again, upon the question of the creation of a new bank, the Republicans were in favor of the measure, and the Federalists, including Mr. Webster, voted against it. His cardinal objection may be said to be based on these facts—or on the cause which produced these facts—the participation of the Government in the management of the bank. Although he failed in procuring an amendment divorcing Bank and State, there were others, of great value, which he introduced and carried. He also brought forward a resolution, which was passed, and tended at once to raise the reputation of the Bank, and the character of the currency, and to put the finances of the United States on a proper specie basis. It required all debts due to the United States to be paid in gold or silver, in treasury-notes, in the notes of the Bank of the United States, or in the paper of some other specie-paying institution.

In regard to the tariff, Mr. Webster was found among the opposers of the principle of protection. This principle was established, as we have already remarked, by Southern influence; and prominent among its supporters was the great Southern statesman, Mr. Calhoun, whose enmity to the

child of his own nursing was afterward so intense, as to lead to the attempt at nullification.

To deny the expediency and wisdom of a measure, is not to deny its constitutionality. To deny the benefits of a contemplated course of policy, is not to deny the power of the Government to take that course. Mr. Webster was undecided as to the power of Government to lay protective duties, but quite decided against the expediency of imposing a protective tariff. The interests he represented would be injuriously affected by it. He stated the case hypothetically thus: If the right of laying duties for protection were derived from the revenue power, it was of necessity incidental; and, on that assumption, as the incident cannot go beyond that to which it is incidental, duties avowedly for protection, and not having any reference to revenue, could not be constitutionally laid. The practice of the Government settled the constitutional question. The passage of laws for the protection of manufactures diverted a large amount of the capital of the country into the channel of manufactures; and Mr. Webster thereafter supported the plan of a moderate degree of protection as the settled policy of the country. It is a *settled policy* which any industrious people

need. Enterprise can shape itself to the fixed measures of any wise government; but no enterprise, and no industry, can thrive under frequent vital changes.

In April, 1816, at the age of seventy-six, died Daniel Webster's mother. She had prophesied in his infancy his future distinction; and she lived to see her words verified. It is asserted by those who knew her, that Mr. Webster's extraordinary genius resembled his mother's, who was a woman of far more than ordinary intellect. She was a woman of the warmest affections, and lived for her husband and children. Remarkable for her piety, and all that renders the character of woman estimable, she was respected by all who knew her, and venerated by her children. Among the choice specimens of art which adorned the library of Daniel Webster at Marshfield, the object which oftenest caught the statesman's eye in his retirement, was a small profile, cut in black, as was the custom many years ago; under it are the words, in the son's handwriting, "MY EXCELLENT MOTHER. D. W."

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Webster's removal to Boston—His entrance upon Professional life in that Metropolis — His manner at the Bar — Personal Characteristics — Death of his child — The Dartmouth College Case — Mr. Webster as a Constitutional Lawyer — The United States Supreme Court—Dartmouth and the Indians—The Nantucket Friend — Summary of his Professional career.

IN 1816, Mr. Webster removed from Portsmouth to Boston. He had frequently appeared as counsel in the courts of Massachusetts, and he had become, both by his Congressional and legal career, well-known to the citizens of the New England metropolis. Its leading merchants knew and were ready to employ him. A pleasant joke of Mr. Webster's, which, among all the anecdotes and reminiscences his death has called up, we have never seen in print, had reference to his leaving New Hampshire. On some complimentary occasion, when, as was much more the custom formerly than at present, everything and everybody was the subject of a "toast" or a "senti-

ment," Mr. Webster was called out as a native of the Granite State. He gave in reply, "New Hampshire:—A very good State to go from!"

Colonel Samuel L. Knapp, who, some eighteen or twenty years ago, was celebrated in Boston for his biographical notes of the living, and his obituary notices of the dead, speaks in the following terms of Mr. Webster's professional commencement in Boston. The fervor of Colonel Knapp's style of praise was not always so well borne out by the subject as in the present case; and the high color of his painting would sometimes have led the reader to suspect his sincerity, if he had not been personally known as one of the kindest and most amiable of men.

"Boston was then the residence of some of the first lawyers of the nation; such men, for instance, as Dexter, Prescott, Otis, Sullivan, Shaw, Gorham, and Hubbard, and there seemed to be little room for another in the upper class of the legal fraternity; but Mr. Webster seemed to walk into this distinguished company like one who had a right; and though many opened wide their eyes, none dared to question his right to be there. In a very few months his name appeared as senior counsel in many important causes; and he

deported himself like one who was simply enjoying his birthright. His practice was not confined to the county of Suffolk, but extended to the neighboring counties, and to the interior of the State. His powers as an advocate and a lawyer were at once conceded, though some found fault with his manners at the Bar as a little too severe and sharp; this, however, was soon forgotten in the admiration which everywhere followed him. The people were always with him, and few had the hardihood to declare themselves his rivals.

“As were his manners at the Bar at this time, so were they through his life, whenever he appeared in a deliberative assembly. He began to state his points in a low voice, and in a slow, cool, cautious, and deliberative manner. If the case was of importance, he went on, hammering out, link by link, his chain of argument, with ponderous blows, leisurely inflicted; and while thus at labor, you rather saw the sinews of the arm than the skill of the artist. It was in reply, however, that he came out in the majesty of intellectual grandeur, and poured forth the opulence of his mind; it was when the arrows of the enemy had hit him, that he was all might and

soul, and showered his words of weight and fire. His style of oratory was founded on no model, but was entirely his own. He dealt not with the fantastic and poetical, but with the matter-of-fact every-day world, and the multifarious affairs of his fellow-men, extricating them from difficulties, and teaching them how to become happy. He never strove to dazzle, astonish, or confuse, but went on to convince and conquer, by great but legitimate means."

The above extracts may be said to embody the popular estimation of Daniel Webster. The writer of this work well remembers the man, as he often met him in the streets of Boston—not one of those popular favorites whom you address on the slightest pretext, sure of a courteous reply; but a giant, the safe course with whom was to let him alone—a being not to be trifled with, but wondered at. One of his eulogists has well drawn his peculiarities of personal character. "He was a man more known and admired than understood. His great qualities were conspicuous from afar—but that part of his nature which he shared with other men, was apprehended by comparatively few. His manners did not always do him justice. For many years of his life, great burdens rested

upon him; and at times his cares and thoughts settled down darkly upon his spirit, and he was then a man of awful presence. He required to be loved, before he could be known. He, indeed, grappled his friends to him with hooks of steel; but he did not always conciliate those who were not his friends. He had a lofty spirit, which could not stoop or dissemble. He could neither affect what he did not feel, nor desire to conceal what he did. His wishes clung with tenacious hold to everything they grasped; and from those who stood, or seemed to stand, in his way, his countenance was averted. Some, who were not unwilling to become his friends, were changed by his manners into foes. He was social in his nature, but not facile. He was seen to the best advantage among a few old and tried friends, especially in his old home. Then his spirits rose, his countenance expanded, and he looked and moved like a schoolboy on a holiday."

On the year of his removal to Boston, following close upon the death of his mother, came the death of his first-born child, at that time his only daughter. His domestic affections were strong, and he felt the affliction keenly, remaining at home and watching through her illness, until

death relieved the little sufferer. He was thus detained from his place in Washington for two months of the session of 1816-17.

In 1818, Mr. Webster's first great constitutional case was argued. In 1816, the legislature of New Hampshire remodelled the charter of Dartmouth College. The institution was created previous to the Revolution, by a royal grant. The legislature changed its name to Dartmouth University, enlarged the number of trustees, and remodelled the institution, against the protest of the old trustees. The newly-created University took possession of the corporate property, and assumed the direction of the institution. The old board, though nominated as trustees of the University, declined to act, and brought an action to recover the college property. The case was decided in the Supreme Court of New Hampshire in favor of the validity of the acts of the Legislature, and against the plaintiffs; Messrs. Mason, Smith, and Webster appearing for the plaintiffs, and the Attorney-General of the State, and Mr. J. Bartlett, for the defendants. Thence the case was carried, by writ of error, to the Supreme Court of the United States; where, on the 10th of March, 1818, it came up for argument before a full bench. Mr.

Hopkinson (afterward Judge) and Mr. Webster appeared for the plaintiffs; and Mr. J. Holmes, of Maine, and Attorney-General Wirt, for the defendants.

Mr. Webster, as junior counsel, opened the case, taking the broad ground that the acts in question were not only against common law, common right, and the Constitution of New Hampshire, but against the Constitution of the United States, which forbids the passage of laws by individual States, violating the obligation of contracts. We have not space to follow the legal argument by which these points were established, and refer those who wish it to the report of Mr. Webster's speech in his published works. The comprehensive view given by Mr. Hilliard of Mr. Webster's services as a constitutional lawyer, dating from this case, is more to our purpose than an abstract of Mr. Webster's argument would be.

“Previous to the Dartmouth College case, in 1818, not many important constitutional cases had come before the Supreme Court of the United States; and since that time, the great lawyer, who then broke upon them with so astonishing a blaze of learning and logic, has excited a communicating influence in shaping that system of constitu-

tional law — almost a supplementary constitution — which has contributed so much to our happiness and prosperity. Great as is our debt of gratitude to such Judges as Marshall and Story, it is hardly less great to such a lawyer as Mr. Webster. None would have been more ready than these eminent magistrates to acknowledge the assistance they had derived from his masterly acquirements.

“In the discussion of constitutional questions, the mind of this great man found a most congenial employment. Here books, cases, and precedents are comparatively of little value. We must ascend to first principles, and be guarded by the light of pure reason. Not only is a chain of logical deduction to be fashioned, but its links must first be forged. Geometry itself hardly leads the mind into a region of more abstract and essential truth. In these calm heights of speculation and analysis, the genius of Mr. Webster moved with natural and majestic sweep. Breaking away from precedents and details, and soaring above the flight of eloquence, it saw the forms of truth in the colorless light and tranquil air of reason. When we dream of intelligences higher than man, we imagine their faculties exercised in serene

inquisitions like these—not spurred by ambition—not kindled by passion—roused by no motive but the love of truth, and seeking no reward but the possession of it.

“The respect which has been paid to the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, is one of the signs of hope for the future, which are not to be overlooked in our desponding moods. The visitor in Washington sees a few grave men, in an unpretending room, surrounded by none of the symbols of command. Some one of them, in a quiet voice, reads an opinion, in which the conflicting rights of sovereign States are weighed and adjusted; and questions, such as have generally led to exhausting wars, are settled by the light of reason and justice. This judgment goes forth, backed by no armed force, but commanded by the moral and intellectual authority of the tribunal which pronounces it. It falls upon the waves of controversy with reconciling and subduing power; and haughty sovereignties, as at the voice of some superior intelligence, put off the mood of conflict and defiance, and yield a graceful obedience to the calm decrees of central justice. There is more cause for national pride in the deference paid to the decisions of this

august tribunal, than in all our material triumphs ; and so long as our people are thus loyal to reason and submissive to law, it is a weakness to despair.

“Mr. Webster’s argument in the Dartmouth College case forms an important era in his life. His argument in that case stands out among his other arguments, and his speech in reply to Mr. Hayne among his other speeches. No better argument has been spoken in the English tongue, in the memory of any living man, nor is the child that is born to-day likely to live to hear a better. Its learning is ample, but not ostentatious ; its logic irresistible ; its eloquence vigorous and lofty. I have often heard my revered and beloved friend, Judge Story, speak with great animation of the effect he then produced upon the Court. ‘For the first hour,’ said he, ‘we listened to him with perfect astonishment ; for the second hour with perfect delight ; for the third hour with perfect conviction.’ It is not too much to say that he entered the Court on that day a comparatively unknown name, and left it with no rival but Pinckney. All the words he spoke on that occasion have not been recorded. When he had exhausted the resources of learning and logic, his mind passed naturally and

simply into a strain of feeling not common to the place. Old recollections and early associations came over him, and the vision of his youth rose up. The genius of the institution where he was nurtured seemed standing by his side in weeds of mourning, with a countenance of sorrow. With suffused eyes and faltering voice, he broke into an unpremeditated strain of emotion, so strong and so deep, that all who heard him were borne along with it. Heart answered to heart as he spoke; and when he had ceased, the silence and tears of the impassive bench, as well as the excited audience, were a tribute to the truth and power of the feeling by which he had been inspired."

Another writer describes a scene so unusual from the testimony of witnesses. "The logic and the law were rendered irresistible. But as he advanced his heart warmed to the subject and to the occasion. Thoughts and feelings that had grown old with his best affections rose unbidden to his lips. He remembered that the institution he was defending was the one where his own youth had been nurtured; and the moral tenderness and beauty this gave to the grandeur of his thoughts, the sort of religious sensibility it imparted to his urgent appeals and demands for the

stern fulfilment of what law and justice required, wrought up the whole audience to an extraordinary pitch of excitement. Many betrayed strong agitation—many were dissolved in tears. Prominent among them was that eminent lawyer and statesman, Robert Goodloe Harper, who came to him when he resumed his seat, evincing emotions of the highest gratification. When he ceased to speak, there was a perceptible interval before any one ventured to break the silence; and when that vast crowd separated, not one person of the whole number doubted that the man who had that day so moved, astonished, and controlled them, had vindicated for himself a place at the side of the first jurists of the country. The opinion of the Court was given at the term for 1819, reversing the decision of the New Hampshire Courts; that State readily acquiesced, and Dartmouth College resumed its original form and its prosperity.”

There is an amusing anecdote which Mr. Webster was accustomed to relate respecting the Dartmouth College case. While he was engaged in it, he told President Wheelock that, as the original charter was granted, and the endowment made by Lord Dartmouth, expressly for the purpose of civilizing and instructing the Indians, a

question might arise on this point: as no Indian had been attached to the school for a long period, it would be well for the President to go into Canada, and fetch some of the aborigines within the walls of the College, so that a jury could not find that the charter had been abrogated by that omission. Accordingly, the President went, and found three choice specimens, brought them to the brink of the river, and, after some delay, procured a boat to ferry them across. The young Indians, not precisely understanding the object of so much kindness on the part of the President, espied the walls of the College on the bank, which excited their suspicion and their wonder whether, if once inside those walls, it might be possible to make their exit. The young Indian at the bow of the boat cast a significant glance on his associates, gave the war-whoop, and quick as thought they plunged into the middle of the river, and swam for the shore. The President halloed, entreated, and tried to explain all, but the Indians kept straight on their course to the shore, and made with all speed for the woods. It was the last President Wheelock ever saw or heard of them—so Mr. Webster had to go on with the case, minus the Indians.

The reader who desires to follow Mr. Webster through his labors as a great Constitutional lawyer, "the Expounder of the Constitution," as he has well been termed, must look to larger works than so brief a volume as this. In nearly all the leading cases before the Supreme Court since 1818 he was heard or consulted. In cases between individuals, and between States; in questions where the rights of citizens were affected by the laws of States, and in suits in which the laws of States and of the United States appeared to come in conflict, he has borne an important part in defining the precise limits of the conflicting powers, and the weight of varying interests. His practice before the State Courts has also been very extensive. He was appealed to wherever the interests at stake would warrant the large expense which his talents commanded. From the close of his second term in Congress, in 1817, until he resumed his seat in the National Legislature, in 1823, he devoted himself assiduously to his profession. Clients crowded upon him, and his income from his professional practice was greater than any lawyer who had preceded him. His reputation increased with every year, and a most brilliant prospect in every respect opened before him.

During these six years he was engaged very little in the public service. He performed the merely nominal duty of an elector, being one of the college which elected Mr. Monroe to his second Presidential term; and he was also a member of the Convention which revised the Constitution of Massachusetts, in 1821. In that Convention he performed an important part, and gave his adopted State the advantage of his close study upon the principles of government.

There is an anecdote connected with Mr. Webster's practice in Boston, which should not be lost. A member of the Society of Friends, from Nantucket, applied to Mr. Webster to manage a suit then pending in court on that island. He demurred to Mr. Webster's charge—one thousand dollars—but at length promised that sum, provided Mr. Webster would consent to attend to any other little matters he might present during the session of the Court. With this understanding Mr. Webster was present when the case was called up. It was heard and decided in his client's favor. Another was taken up—another, and still another, and all assigned to Mr. Webster. Finding he was doing all the business, Mr. Webster became impatient and demanded an explanation. His client,

having now got through, said: "I hired thee, Daniel, to attend to all the business of the Court. Thee has done it handsomely. Here's thy money!" It is said that the client, through the wages of his distinguished journeyman, recovered his thousand dollars, and made a few hundreds over. We cannot better conclude our account of Mr. Webster's professional life, than by adopting the eloquent language of Mr. Hilliard.

"He was, from the beginning, more or less occupied with public affairs, and he continued to the last to be a practising lawyer; but, as regards these two spheres of action, his life may be divided into two distinct portions. From his twenty-third to his forty-first year, the practice of the law was his primary occupation and interest, but from the latter period to his death, it was secondary to his labors as a legislator and statesman. Of his eminence in the law — meaning the law as administered in the ordinary tribunals of the country, without reference, for the present, to Constitutional questions — there is but one opinion among competent judges. Some may have excelled him in a single faculty or accomplishment; but in the combination of qualities which the law requires, no man of his time was, on the whole, equal to him.

He was a safe counsellor and a powerful advocate; thorough in the preparation of causes and judicious in the management of them; quick, far-seeing, cautious and bold. His addresses to the jury were simple, manly, and direct; presenting the strong points of the case in his strong way, appealing to the reason and the conscience, and not to passions and prejudices; and never weakened by over-statement. He laid his own mind fairly along-side that of the jury, and won their confidence by his sincere way of dealing with them. He had the grace to cease speaking when he had come to an end.

“His most conspicuous power was his clearness of statement. He threw upon every subject a light like that of the sun at noonday. His mind, by an unerring instinct, separated the important from the unimportant facts in a complicated case, and so presented the former that he was really making a powerful and persuasive argument, when he seemed to be only telling a plain story in a plain way. The transparency of the stream veiled its depth, and its depth concealed its rapid flow. His legal learning was accurate and perfectly at command, and he had made himself master of some difficult branches of law, such as special pleading

and the law of real property ; but the memory of some of his contemporaries was more richly stored with cases. From his remarkable powers of generalization, his elementary reading had filled his mind with principles, and he examined the questions that arose by the light of these principles, and then sought in the books for cases to confirm the views which he had reached by reflection. He never resorted to stratagems and surprises, nor did he let his zeal for his client run away with his self-respect. His judgment was so clear, and his moral sense so strong, that he never could help discriminating between a good cause and a bad one ; nor betraying to a close observer when he was arguing against his convictions. His manner was admirable, especially for its repose, an effective quality in an advocate, from the consciousness of strength which it implies. The uniform respect with which he treated the bench should not be omitted, in summing up his merits as a lawyer.

“The exclusive practice of the law is not held to be the best preparation for public life. Not only does it invigorate without expanding—not only does it narrow at the same time that it sharpens—but the custom of addressing juries

begets a habit of over-statement, which is a great defect in a public speaker; and the mind that is constantly occupied in looking at one side of a disputed question, is apt to forget that it has two. Great minds triumph over these influences, but it is because they never fail, sooner or later, to overleap the formal barriers of the law. Had Mr. Webster been born in England and educated to the Bar, his powers could never have been confined to Westminster Hall. He would have been taken up and borne into Parliament by an irresistible tide of public opinion. Born where he was, it would have been the greatest of misfortunes if he had narrowed his mind, and given up to his clients the genius that was meant for the whole country and all time. Admirably as he put a case to the jury, or argued it to the court, it was impossible not to feel that in many instances an inferior person would have done it nearly or quite as well; and sometimes the disproportion between the man and the work was so great, that it reminded one of the task given to Michael Angelo, to make a statue of snow.

“His advancing reputation, however, soon led him into a class of cases, the peculiar growth of the institutions of his country, and admirably

fitted to train a lawyer for public life, because, though legal in their form, they involve great questions of politics and government. The system under which we live is, in many respects, without a precedent. Singularly complicated in its arrangements, embracing a general government of limited and delegated powers, organised by an interfusion of separate sovereignties, all with written constitutions to be interpreted and reconciled, the imperfection of human language and the strength of human passion leaving a wide margin for warring opinions, it is obvious to any person of political experience, that many grave questions, both of construction and conflicting jurisdiction, must arise, requiring wisdom and authority for their adjustment. Especially must this be the case in a country like ours, of such great extent, with such immense national resources, and inhabited by so enterprising and energetic a people. It was a fortunate, may we not say a providential circumstance, that the growth of the country begun to devolve upon the Supreme Court of the United States the consideration of this class of questions, just at the time when Mr. Webster, in his ripe manhood, was able to give them the benefit of his extraordinary powers of argument and analysis."

CHAPTER XI.

The Pilgrim Address at Plymouth—A Prophecy—Its fulfilment—Foundation of Bunker-Hill Monument—Completion of the Monument—Eulogy on Adams and Jefferson—Other Eulogies—The Washington Address, in 1832—Address at the Capitol enlargement—The Trial of the Knapps for the Murder of Captain Joseph White—Power of Conscience.

AMONG the public performances which have given Mr. Webster his American reputation, must be mentioned, as first in order, his addresses upon occasions of great national interest. Here were themes into which no party or sectional feeling entered, and all men of all parties could sympathize with the orator. The first in order of time was the oration at Plymouth, on the bi-centennial anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, on the 20th of December, 1820. On several subsequent occasions, Mr. Webster spoke upon the same anniversary, but his later addresses were not so carefully prepared, and were not delivered to a miscellaneous audience, but to

the members and guests of New England Societies, in cities out of New England. The address delivered at Plymouth has a great historical value, and in its analysis of the character and motives of the Pilgrim Fathers shows a patriotic appreciation of the subject worthy of one of the most distinguished sons of New England. Mr. Webster's early education, as we have seen, prepared him for admiration of the men who founded the New England States. His description of the condition of the wanderers, their sufferings on the deep, and on the bleak and inhospitable shores of New England, is graphic and pathetic. The tracing back of the New England character to the causes which formed it, shows a rare talent at discrimination. *Thought* is the grand element of this performance. It is not mere rhapsody, nor does it deal in extravagant praise. Calm and philosophical in its deductions, rich in facts, and profound in wisdom, it has scarce a burst of enthusiasm, except in the predictions of the future. The following passage contains a remarkable prophecy—remarkable when delivered, thirty years ago.

“Two thousand miles westward from the rock where their fathers landed, may now be found

the sons of the Pilgrims, cultivating smiling fields, rearing towns and villages, and cherishing, we trust, the patrimonial blessings of wise institutions of liberty and religion. The world has seen nothing like this. Regions large enough to be empires, and which, half a century ago, were known only as remote and unexplored wildernesses, are now teeming with population, and prosperous in all the great concerns of life; in good governments, the means of subsistence, and social happiness. It may be safely asserted, that there are now more than a million of people, descendants of New England ancestry, living, free and happy, in regions which, scarce sixty years ago, were tracts of unpenetrated forest. Nor do rivers, or mountains, or seas, resist the progress of industry and enterprise. Ere long, the sons of the Pilgrims will be on the shores of the Pacific. The imagination hardly keeps pace with the progress of population, improvement and civilization."

In 1850, at the festival of the New England Society of New York, Mr. Webster, being a guest, had the gratification to refer to the fulfilment of a prophecy, which seemed at the time of its utterance almost a rhapsody. He said: "We have hardly begun, my brethren. to realize the vast im-

portance to human society, and to the history and happiness of the world, of the voyage of that little vessel, which brought hither the love of civil and religious liberty, and the reverence of the Bible, for the instruction of the future generations of men. We have hardly begun to realize the consequences of that voyage. Heretofore the extension of our race, following our New England ancestry, has crept along the shore. But now it has extended itself. It has crossed the continent. It has not only transcended the Alleghanies, but it has capped the Rocky Mountains. It is now upon the shores of the Pacific; and on the day, or, if not on the day, then this day twelvemonth, descendants of New England will there celebrate the landing.

“(A VOICE. ‘To-day; they celebrate it to-day!’)

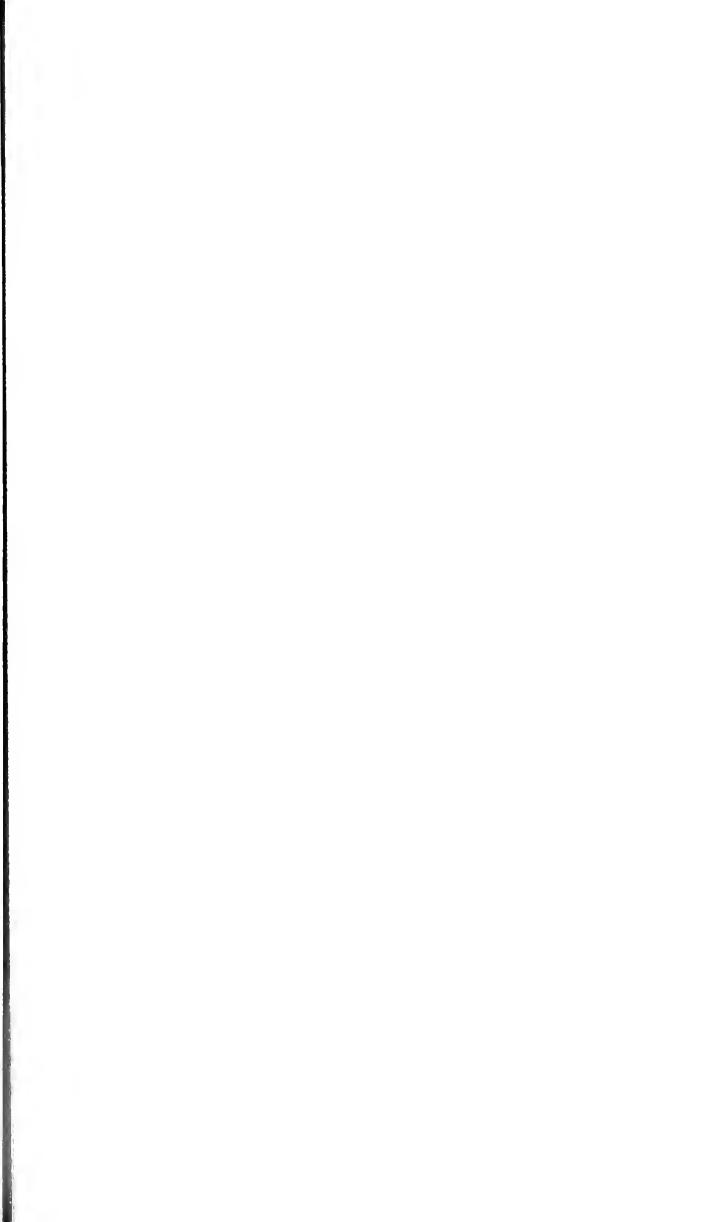
“God bless them! Here’s to the health and success of the California Society of Pilgrims, assembled on the shores of the Pacific. And it shall yet go hard, if the three hundred millions of people of China, provided they are intelligent enough to understand any thing, shall not one day hear and know something of the Rock of Plymouth, too!”

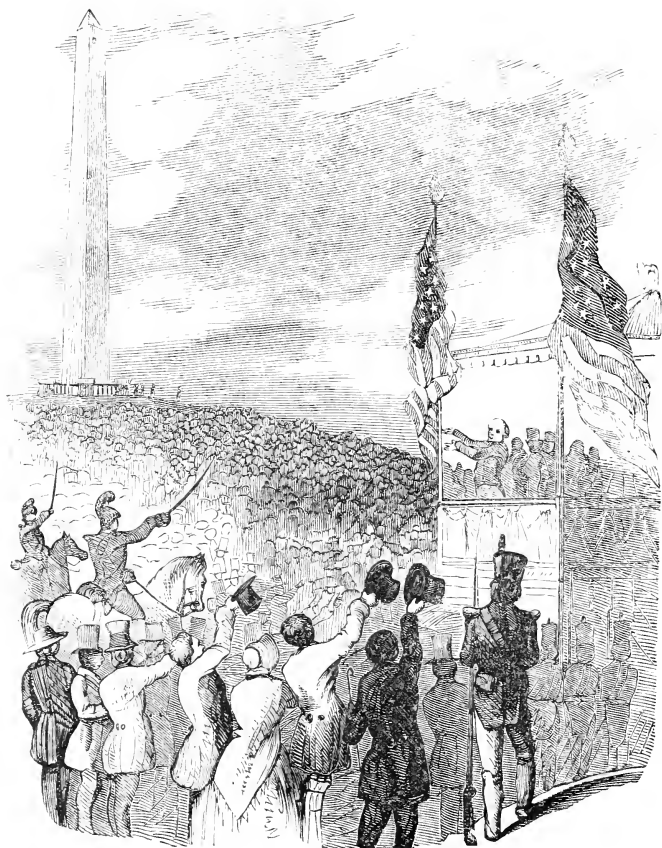
In 1825, on the 17th of June, the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker-Hill, the corner-stone of

the monument commemorating that great event was laid. General Lafayette was at that time the guest of the American people, and united with the Grand-Master of the Freemasons, and with Mr. Webster, the President of the Monument Association, in the ceremony. There were in the procession two hundred veterans of the Revolution, forty of whom were survivors of the battle. Scarce one of those men remains. Twenty-five years ago, a place was assigned to such veterans in every patriotic procession—now the places which knew them know them no more forever. The pageant, in the numbers who took part in it, and in the enthusiasm which animated all, has never been exceeded. It had all the elements of moral grandeur, and forms an epoch in the life of those who witnessed it. Mr. Webster was the orator, and we need not say that he was equal, so far as man could be, to such an occasion. Our space permits extracts from but few of Mr. Webster's speeches. Those from which we have chiefly drawn, are among the least known, and valuable to our purpose, because they were the work of his youth. But the Bunker-Hill orations are classics—the study of the school-boy and of the ardent youth—the fountain from which the calmer patriotism of later years draws a renewal of its inspiration.

On the 17th of June, 1843, the completion of the monument was celebrated, and the voice of the same orator was heard by the assembled thousands. The work had been completed during the previous year, having been seventeen years in building. The Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association had finished the work begun by the original association, by promoting a new subscription, and the ladies of Boston and vicinity came also to the enterprise, with patriotic zeal. In the time which had elapsed since the laying of the corner-stone, the population of Boston and Charlestown had doubled, and that of the whole country had largely increased. Improved traveling facilities brought their thousands. It is estimated that one hundred thousand persons were collected, of whom nearly half were within the sound of the speaker's voice. In all this multitude there were but about one hundred of the survivors of the revolutionary army. Sixty-eight years had elapsed since the day of the battle in commemoration of which the monument was built. An extract from Mr. Webster's oration happily illustrates the feeling of that multitude, and the inspiration of the speaker.

“The Bunker-Hill Monument is finished. Here





ORATION ON BUNKER HILL.

it stands. Fortunate in the high natural eminence on which it is placed, higher, infinitely higher in its objects and purpose, it rises over the land and over the sea; and visible, at their homes, to three hundred thousand of the people of Massachusetts, it stands a memorial of the last, and a monitor to the present, and all succeeding generations. I have spoken of the loftiness of its purpose. If it had been without any other design than the creation of a work of art, the granite of which it is composed would have slept in its native bed. It has a purpose, and that purpose gives it its character. That purpose enrobes it with dignity and moral grandeur. That well-known purpose it is which causes us to look up to it with feelings of awe. It is itself the orator of this occasion. It is not from my lips, it could not be from any human lips, that that strain of eloquence is this day to flow, most competent to move and to excite the vast multitudes around me. That powerful speaker stands motionless before us!"

Here Mr. Webster paused, and pointed in silent admiration to the lofty pile. The assembled thousands burst into long and loud applause. When the echoes of that mighty shout died away, the orator proceeded: "It is a plain shaft. It bears

no inscription, fronting to the rising sun, from which the future antiquary shall wipe the dust. Nor does the rising sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit. But at the rising of the sun, and the setting of the sun ; in the blaze of noonday, and beneath the milder effulgence of lunar light ; it looks, it speaks, it acts to the full comprehension of every American mind, and the awakening of glowing enthusiasm in every American heart. Its silent but awful utterance, its deep pathos, as it brings to our contemplation the 17th of June, 1775, and the consequences which have resulted to us, to our country, and to the world, from the events of that day, and which we know must continue to rain influence upon the destinies of manhood, till the end of time ; the elevation with which it raises us high above the ordinary feelings of life, surpass all that the study of the closet, or even the usurpation of genius, can produce. To-day it speaks to us. Its future auditories will be successive generations of men, as they rise up before it and gather around it. Its speech will be of patriotism and courage ; of civil and religious liberty ; of free government ; of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind, and of the immortal memory of those who, with he-

roic devotion, have sacrificed their lives for their country."

If Mr. Webster was endowed with wonderful talents, he was favored also with remarkable opportunities for their employment—occasions which gave full scope for their exercise, and left, for himself and his friends, nothing to desire. The centenary celebration of the landing of the Pilgrims; the half-century anniversary of Bunker-Hill; the presence of Lafayette, and the founding of the monument; these and its completion were full of worthy themes for his oratorical powers. Another, and in some respects a greater occasion, occurred in 1826, when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both signers of the Declaration of Independence, and both ex-Presidents of the United States, died within a few hours of each other, upon the National Anniversary. On the 2d of August following their death, Mr. Webster delivered, in Faneuil Hall, a discourse commemorative of their lives and services. No similar performance has commanded so wide a circle of readers as this; and, in some respects, it may be regarded as the most celebrated of Mr. Webster's speeches. With the names of the great dead whose character he eulogized—and not merely eulogized, but analysed,

and drew wisdom and instruction from their example—the name of Webster would descend to posterity had he written nothing else. In such performances, he was not the mere orator appealing to popular enthusiasm, but the historian and the philosopher.

There are other specimens of Mr. Webster's addresses on obituary occasions, less studied perhaps, but not less eloquent than the Adams and Jefferson oration. He was the eulogist of his early friends, Mason and Story; of Calhoun and Taylor, and others of his friends and associates in a long public life. These addresses, in the Senate and at meetings of the bar, have a simplicity and dignity which mark them as models. While doing justice to the deceased, they abounded in the evidences of Mr. Webster's goodness of heart and personal kindness, and they yet preserve the rare merit of sincerity. They may be taken as impartial judgments. Nothing is to be deducted from them for the usual freedom of such occasions.

In 1832, Mr. Webster presided in Washington City at a commemoration of the birth-day of the Father of his country. His speech is well worth the study of those who would duly understand and appreciate the character of Washington, and

the value of the Union—a subject upon which Mr. Webster never failed to speak upon all proper occasions. As he said of Washington, we may say of Webster, “The Union was the great object of his thoughts. He regarded the union of these States, less as one of our blessings, than as the great treasure-house which contained them all. Here, in his judgment, was the great magazine of all our means of prosperity; here, as he thought, and as every true American still thinks, are deposited all our animating prospects—all our solid hopes for future greatness.”

The last of Mr. Webster’s patriotic or national addresses was delivered on the Fourth of July, 1851, at the laying of the corner-stone of the addition to the Capitol of the United States. In this, the paramount idea is the value of the Union, and our duty, as citizens, in perpetuating it. He appeals in eloquent terms to those who had spoken of disunion, and defines his idea of the cause of such a diseased state of public feeling. “For my part,” he says, “I confess that the real evil existing in the case, appears to me to be a certain inquietude or uneasiness, growing out of a high degree of prosperity and consciousness of wealth and power, which sometimes lead men to be ready

for changes, and to push on, unreasonably, to still higher elevation. If this be the truth of the matter, her political doctors [secession-men] are about right. If the complaint sprung from overwrought prosperity, for that disease, I have no doubt that secession would prove a sovereign remedy." The orator did not fail, however, before he closed, to express in emphatic terms his faith in the prosperity of the republic. The facts which he advanced relative to its progress and increase were peculiarly appropriate to the occasion, and the address was, like all Mr. Webster's speeches of this nature, a performance of more than temporary or passing interest.

Of his many political and popular addresses, called forth from time to time by the urgency of public affairs, we cannot find place to speak. They belong to a more extended work than ours, and can, indeed, be judged of only by perusal. But there was one criminal trial in which he was engaged, in aid of the public prosecution, which will be remembered, and referred to, as long as the records of our criminal jurisprudence are preserved. Captain Joseph White, a highly respectable citizen of Salem, Massachusetts, was found murdered in his bed, on the morning of the 7th of April, 1830.

A strong sensation was excited throughout the community. Circumstances led to the arrest of Robert Crowninshield, George Crowninshield, Joseph J. Knapp, and John F. Knapp. Robert Crowninshield, by whom the deed was done, committed suicide in prison. George Crowninshield proved an alibi, and was discharged. The two Knapps were convicted as accessories, and executed. The motive to the murder was the destruction of a will, and the securing, by the death of Captain White, that no other should be made. In case of his death without a will, the estate would, it was supposed by Joseph J. Knapp, be divided between his mother-in-law, as the representative of one of Mr. White's sisters, and the children of a deceased brother, Mrs. Beckford receiving one-half. But the last will was found, the assassin having taken away the wrong document; and thus the horrid murder, even if the criminals had remained undetected, would have failed of its covetous purpose.

Mr. Webster investigated every circumstance. He shut himself up in his room, and revolved and re-examined every feature of the case. He described to the jury with fearful minuteness every step of the assassin in his secret murder, as the

whole had been developed by circumstantial evidence, and the confession of one of the parties. He painted the horror of the murderer after the deed was done — his conscience impelling him to confess, his fears restraining him. “There is no refuge,” he said, “from suicide but confession, and suicide is confession.” The hired assassin’s connexion with his accomplices was established, and his confession by suicide sealed their doom. Without Mr. Webster’s aid, justice would have been defeated of her due. The great advocate undertook the case with much unwillingness, but having undertaken the assistance of the prosecuting attorney, he brought all his powers to bear upon the case; and, while he procured the conviction of the desperate murderers, he gave to the world the most sublime description of “the worm that never dies” that modern literature can furnish.





FANEUIL HALL.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Webster's reluctance to re-enter Congress—His Election in 1822 and 1824—Present of an Annuity—Speech upon the Greek Question—The Panama Mission—Mr. Adams's Administration—Mr. Webster's Labors in Committee—His Election as Senator—Death of his Wife—Webster and Hayne—Death of Ezekiel Webster—Nullification—The Bank Question—Faneuil Hall Dinner—Visit to England—Mr. Webster as Secretary of State—Again in the Senate—Mexican War—Death of his Son Edward—Again Secretary—Hulsemann—Kossuth.

WE have now reached that point in Mr. Webster's life at which the plan of our work requires that we should be less minute in detail and less diffuse in comment. Having traced him to the head of his profession as a lawyer, and shown the full reward which he received for his early application and industry, we may briefly notice his career as a legislator and a statesman. While this portion of his life is widely known as a part of the history of his whole country, its proper discussion would require volumes. To larger works, to the published collections of Mr. Webster's speeches

and writings, and to the history of the United States since 1824, we must refer the reader who would perfect his knowledge of Daniel Webster's public services. From his election to Congress, in 1823, until the close of his life, he was almost uninterruptedly engaged in the service of his country—his WHOLE COUNTRY; for he had, more than any other public man since Washington, a comprehensive attachment to the Union as a whole. He believed that in the preservation of the Union alone could the prosperity and glory of the several parts be maintained.

On some points of public policy his opinions unquestionably were changed and modified by circumstances. If they had not been, he would have stood alone in the history of men and of parties; for there is no one of whom the same cannot be said. His principles remained unchanged—his love of country unabated. But in the modes of applying those principles, and vindicating his attachment to his native land and her true happiness, the growing population, wealth, and power of the United States, the uprising of new interests and the decline of old, suggested and made necessary some changes in matters of policy and legis-

lation. These we shall not attempt to describe or to particularize.

When Mr. Webster settled in Boston, it was with the view of following his profession, and reaping the harvest which his early application and industry had prepared for him. Success almost unexampled attended his efforts. He was on the sure path to opulence, when the leading men of Boston, of kindred political opinions, applied to him for his consent to stand as a candidate to Congress. He was offered first the nomination as Representative, and upon his declining that, he was tendered an election as Senator; but to both offers he gave a courteous but decided refusal. Meanwhile, his high reputation was daily increasing, and the anxiety of his friends that he should represent his adopted State in the Congress of the United States also augmented. In 1822, his reluctance gave way before repeated persuasion. A committee called upon him, and read to him the vote of the convention by which he had been nominated, with the letter urging his acceptance; and, informing him that they had been instructed to bring back no answer, retired; leaving him, in a manner, a compulsory candidate. Mr. Webster's reluctance was not assumed, but real. He was too

familiar with the examples of the great statesmen who have been impoverished by public service, to desire an honour so expensive, and the result more than proved his anticipations. He was elected by a thousand majority, and at the next election, in 1824, was re-elected, receiving four thousand and ninety out of five thousand votes; a unanimity unparalleled. Twenty-four years afterwards, when the course of events had shown the personal loss at which Mr. Webster exchanged professional for political life, the same gentlemen who had demanded of him the sacrifice, in some measure repaired it, by placing the income of THIRTY-SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS at his disposal. The manner in which it was tendered and accepted was creditable to the sense of justice and the delicacy of one party, and the frankness and gratitude of the other. It was an honourable testimony gracefully received and acknowledged; and although made the subject of political reflections and pasquinades, had in it nothing which donors or recipient should hesitate to acknowledge.

The most celebrated speeches of Mr. Webster, while in the House of Representatives, were upon the Greek Revolution and the Panama Mission. Mr. Webster, in accordance with the warm sympathy

for the Greeks expressed by President Monroe, moved the provision, by law, of the sum necessary to defray the expense of the appointment of a Commissioner to Greece. The Greeks were at that time struggling for their freedom and national existence against the tyranny of the Moslem. The measure, notwithstanding the support of Webster, Clay, and other distinguished statesmen, was not at that time carried; but the discussion awakened new interest in the history and fate of Greece; and Mr. Webster's speech stands among his noblest efforts. On the subject of the Panama Mission, Mr. Webster defended the administration of Mr. Adams, who had appointed delegates to confer with the Southern Republics. The appointment was made in the spirit of Mr. Monroe's declaration, that our government would regard any European combination to effect political objects on the Continent as affecting ourselves, and demanding preparation to meet it. Mr. Clay was in the Cabinet, and on Mr. Webster devolved the arduous duty of defending an unpopular administration against as zealous and strong an opposition as any Executive of the United States has ever been compelled to act against. The position of leader of the administration-party in the House unquestion-

ably developed his extraordinary powers ; but probably it imposed upon him a portion of the popular odium, however unjust in its intensity, which the administration of Mr. Adams labored under. Mr. Adams came into office under the indignant protest of a large party, and it is but latterly that justice has been done to his patriotism and his motives. He had no powers of conciliation, and seemed unable either to attack political friends, or to conciliate opponents.

Mr. Webster's sphere as a debater was not the only mode in which he rendered service to his country during his Congressional career. He was a most efficient member of various important committees, and the Acts which he digested and presented for the action of Congress, while the least brilliant, are far from being the least important of his legislative services. Among these may be noticed the amended Act, "To punish certain crimes against the United States." To this work he brought his large and varied experience ; and the law, which passed substantially as he reported it, forms a complete code of the criminal law of the United States as distinct from the several States.

In 1826, Mr. Webster was a third time elected

to the House of Representatives; but before he took his seat, a vacancy occurring in the Senatorial delegation, he was elected by the Legislature of Massachusetts to the Senate of the United States. While on his way to Washington, in 1827, accompanied by his wife, that lady was taken ill and died. This melancholy event delayed Mr. Webster's arrival in Washington until January, 1828. During the session, Mr. Webster made strong and praiseworthy exertions in behalf of the survivors of the Revolutionary army. This subject, and also the rendition of justice to the sufferers by the spoliations of France upon our commerce prior to 1800, he frequently labored to press upon the attention of Congress.

In 1830, occurred Mr. Webster's great Senatorial triumph. The opposition to President Adams had taken somewhat the character of political enmity to New England. The triumphant popularity of General Jackson had failed to include New England in its influence. That portion of the Union remained true to its opposition, and the dominant party were inclined to punish the New-Englanders, and to suspect their motives. A very harmless resolution, introduced by Mr. Foote, Senator from Connecticut, furnished the main subject-mat-

ter for speeches through a whole session. The debate was discursive, and took a very wide range. Most of the orators of the Senate spoke during its continuance. The little matter which kindled all this fire was a resolution, based upon the fact that the annual demand for land then existing was only equal to one-fiftieth part, or less, of the land already surveyed and in the market, and proposing, therefore, the inquiry whether sales could not be restricted to the lands already offered, and a portion of the land-office machinery be abolished. Western men, led by Mr. Benton, denounced this as a blow aimed at the Western States, and intended to check their increase; and the South, appealed to by the West, joined against New England, holding the whole of that portion of the Confederacy guilty of the evil purpose attributed to Mr. Foote. Colonel Hayne, of South Carolina, stood forth as the principal champion in the onslaught, and attacked New England with great bitterness. Mr. Webster and his friends regarded the attack as intended to reflect upon him, and that gentleman felt himself, therefore, called upon to reply. He did so, defending New England, and contending that in every case in which measures had been taken by the general government favor-

able to the West, they had been carried by New England votes. Mr. Webster was followed by Colonel Benton in reply, and Colonel Hayne succeeded the latter.

Into this speech Colonel Hayne threw his whole strength. It was a dashing, masterly effort, and displayed powers which exhibited him as an antagonist worthy of Daniel Webster. His speech, commenced on Thursday, was concluded on the following Monday. Mr. Webster rose to reply, but gave way to a motion to adjourn, and on Tuesday, January 29th, commenced and concluded his reply. Neither of the parties in this oratorical combat disappointed their friends: both, indeed, exceeded expectation. While Colonel Hayne's speech was unanswered, the friends of Webster had their fears that, great as were his acknowledged talents, he was not equal to this peculiar description of encounter. The friends of Colonel Hayne were all elation—the New-Englanders were, to say the least, sedate. But Daniel Webster proved, as ever, equal to any exigence. The Hall of the Senate was crowded as it never had been before, and the city of Washington was filled with strangers brought in by the rumors of the great debate—the attack of Hayne, and the

expected reply of Webster. Gallantly did he defend New England; ably did he manage the argumentative, and adroitly the personal and salient, portions of his speech. In variety of style — pathos, satire, ponderous argument, light raillery, animating apostrophe — Mr. Webster never, on any other occasion, exceeded his reply to Colonel Hayne. The speech is too well known to require analysis here, even if analysis could do it justice; and we make no extracts save the following — the conclusion and climax in effect:—

“When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once-glorious Union; on States dismembered, discordant, belligerent! on a land rent with civil feud, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble and lingering glance rather behold the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, still high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre; not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured; bearing for its motto no such miserable interrogatory as ‘What is all this worth?’ Nor those other words of delusion and folly, ‘Liberty first and Union

afterwards;’ but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, blazing on its ample folds, as they float over the sea and over the land, and in every wind under the whole heavens, that other sentiment, dearer to every American heart, *Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!*”

Popular applause, and the discriminating praise of the few, formal thanks by State Legislatures, and spontaneous acknowledgments, followed this effort of Mr. Webster’s. His supporters pronounced him victor, and even the friends of Colonel Hayne claimed only that the combatants were equal. The fame of Daniel Webster stood higher than ever with his countrymen. But from all this applause the man of warm heart and intense domestic affections turned to say, “*How I wish my brother Ezekiel had lived till after this speech, that I might know if he would have been gratified!*” A few months before, while pleading a cause in Concord, New Hampshire, his health apparently good, his voice clear, full, and strong, and his argument evincing the possession of the highest faculties, Ezekiel Webster fell backward, and expired without a groan or a struggle. Mr. Webster always alluded to this brother with deep affection and the

highest respect. In early life, as we have already seen, their sympathies and pursuits were identical; and in after years, though in a sphere more circumscribed than his brother, Ezekiel commanded high respect for his talents and personal worth and virtue.

In the Webster and Hayne debate, the subject of "nullification" was a principal theme; Colonel Hayne as the advocate of the nullification theory, Mr. Webster as its opponent. The subject soon came directly before the Senate. The people of South Carolina, through a convention called for the purpose, and by a vote of the Legislature afterwards, pronounced the Tariff Act unconstitutional, null and void, and the State was put in military array. Colonel Hayne resigned his seat in the Senate, and was elected Governor of the State; Mr. Calhoun resigned the Vice-Presidency of the United States, and was chosen Senator in place of Mr. Hayne. President Jackson, in December, 1832, issued his famous proclamation against nullification. Governor Hayne issued a counter-proclamation. The friends of the President brought forward a bill, "making farther provision for the collection of the revenues," which gave the President ample powers to meet an exigency like that

presented by the conduct of South Carolina. Mr. Calhoun made, against this bill, and in support of a series of resolutions which he introduced, an able speech, defending his view of the rights of a State to annul unconstitutional acts of Congress. Mr. Webster replied, defending the national administration. His aid was personally solicited by a member of General Jackson's Cabinet, and, on the day of his answer to Mr. Calhoun, he rode from his lodgings to the Capitol in the President's carriage. Jackson's private secretary had called upon him with a message, and as the carriage was at the door, it conveyed him to the Senate Chamber. Mr. Webster was, in this case, the recognised leader of the administration party; the only man who could successfully cope with Mr. Calhoun. He gave his aid heartily, and during the discussion of the bill, caused it to be amended in several important particulars. Mr. Webster's argument against nullification was one of his most important public acts, and will always be appealed to as a standard commentary on the Constitution.

Supporting the President where right and duty demanded, Mr. Webster did not, therefore, hesitate to speak as decidedly, though courteously,

against him when they differed. In the discussion of the Bank question, Mr. Webster argued in favor of the re-charter. The President, in 1833, removed the deposits of the United States from the National Bank. Mr. Clay brought forward a resolution, at the succeeding meeting of Congress, calling upon the President for a copy of a paper said to have been read by him at a Cabinet meeting in relation to the subject. The President declined compliance; denying the authority of the Senate to make any such call upon him. The contents of the paper were, however, public, and the Senate acted upon the subject without any official communication from the President. Resolutions of substantial censure were passed, on motion of Mr. Clay, and against these the President sent to the Senate his protest. Against this, Mr. Webster made one of his most carefully-prepared speeches, and defended the privileges of the Senate, while he conceded to the President "honesty of motive and integrity of purpose."

In the Currency debates, which continued during Mr. Van Buren's administration, Mr. Webster took an important and leading part. But he clung with less tenacity than some other politicians to the idea of the absolute necessity of a United States

Bank. What would have been his course had he remained in the Senate during President Tyler's term, we can now only conjecture; or how he would have proceeded under the repeated defeats of the Bank project brought forward in Congress and vetoed by Mr. Tyler. It is certain that he regarded the revival of the Bank controversy as a measure of questionable necessity and expediency; and in a popular address, delivered in Boston, in 1842, he said, "A Bank of the United States founded on a private subscription is out of the question. That is an obsolete idea. The country and the condition of things have changed." Mr. Webster contended against disturbance of the currency, and the modes of negotiating exchanges and managing the revenues; but after the change was made, he did not desire to contend for "obsolete ideas." The experience of the country now shows that we are better without such an institution. In like manner, Mr. Webster, though an advocate for the protection of domestic manufactures, has made that question not paramount to all others, but co-important with them. He has on all subjects recommended measures consonant with the general weal. His mind was too capacious, his views too catholic, to urge him to the

carrying out of a theory at the expense of the practical interests of the country; or to argue that, because the government has certain constitutional powers, it is therefore necessary to exercise and test them, without regard to expediency, and in defiance of the wishes of a minority.

The most important part of Mr. Webster's Congressional life was prior to 1838; and in that year certain citizens of Boston, the thew and sinew of that ancient city, tendered their Senator the compliment of a public dinner in Faneuil Hall. There were many such compliments paid him; and without desiring the eclat of such assemblages, which was really nothing to Daniel Webster, he could be grateful for the motives which prompted his friends thus to honor him. No man had less fondness for parade than he; and none was more heartily rejoiced to escape from the plaudits and acclamations of the crowd to the calm enjoyment of the society of his friends. Faneuil Hall has very many times echoes with his full, manly voice; and when that was hushed forever, the weeping people there listened to the eulogies of those who loved and knew him best.

In the year 1839, Mr. Webster visited Europe. The fame of his talents had preceded him; and

the appearance and ability of the man more than seconded all that had been reported of him. No official personage could have received more attention; and no American was ever more gratified at his reception abroad. The attentions which he received were not so much formal as cordial. There was nothing of display, but everything which hospitality could dictate. The landholders of England welcomed a brother farmer; statesmen and lawyers found in him their peer, and the English people seemed to claim a pride and property in their transatlantic cousin; familiar as themselves with all that is rich in British literature, or valuable in the history and experience of the mother country.

Having, previously to his voyage, declined to be considered a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Mr. Webster returned to bear a very important part in the canvassing which preceded the election of General Harrison. His magnanimous character has been more than once exhibited in this manner. He who never could be persuaded to make popular capital for himself, had never hesitated to sacrifice himself for others. He was too conscious of his own powers to offer them at retail on the hustings for the purchase of an

election. He was undoubtedly satisfied that his services deserved the reward of an election to the Presidency; but he desired that others should award him his meed, and would not stoop to beg for it.

He did not heartily second the nomination of Harrison, of Clay, in 1844, or of Taylor, in 1848; but to all three he lent his aid when they were made; having in view the success of the party which he believed could best promote the prosperity of the country. What would have been his course in the case of General Scott, had his health and life been spared, it is now impossible to tell. It would be a misrepresentation to say that Mr. Webster was not disappointed in the failure of his friends to secure his nomination, or that he approved the selection of General Scott as the candidate of his party. But we cannot go the length to believe that this disappointment preyed upon him with any fatal effect. He felt it, without a doubt; for he would have been unjust to himself had he not been sensible that his forty years of public service had conferred substantial benefit and world-wide renown upon his country, which the gift of the highest honors could not have repaid. He would have honored the Presidency—

it could have conferred no new honor upon him. Had he lived, the zeal of his friends might have diminished President Pierce's majority; or he might, with his ever-elastic manliness, have withdrawn his name peremptorily, as he had done before. Now, it matters not; nor is it worth while to speculate upon the subject.

Mr. Webster was called, by General Harrison, to a seat in his Cabinet. He was tendered the Secretaryship of the Treasury, but preferred the Department of State. In one short month, General Harrison was no more. He died amid the profound regrets of the people, and the office of President was, for the first time in the history of the country, filled by the alternate provided by the Constitution. Mr. Tyler proved unacceptable to the party who had elected him. The other members of the Cabinet felt it their duty to retire; but Mr. Webster, contrary to the wishes of his party, and in spite of censure, and, from some quarters, unmerited obloquy, chose to remain. He had a duty to the whole country to fulfil; a sense of honor to satisfy, with which a hasty retirement would not have been compatible. With no personal ends to satisfy, but at a sacrifice to himself, he remained attached to an unpopular administra-

tion till he conferred upon the Presidency of Mr. Tyler the honor of adjusting the difficulties with Great Britain, which had baffled all preceding administrations. The treaty of Washington, negotiated by Ashburton and Webster, gave him as high a rank in diplomacy as he had already reached in other departments of professional and public life. Other troublesome questions, with different powers, were also satisfactorily disposed of; and then Mr. Webster retired, without ardent popular applause, but with the high respect of the judicious of all parties; a respect which already ripens into posthumous fame.

A mere party tactician would have fled the White House when Mr. Tyler's star declined, and contended — probably successfully — for the next nomination. He might have led the Whig opposition to their own impracticable nominee: but Mr. Webster was no tactician. Had he been, a second opportunity was open. Mr. Tyler's heart was set upon the annexation of Texas; and this measure, though very unpalatable to a portion of the Confederacy, has proved popular with the larger party. Mr. Webster might have remained in the Cabinet and promoted this object, if he could have sacrificed his convictions to his ambi-

tion; and the advantage which did not accrue to President Tyler might have fallen to his Secretary. But he left office; and, as he left, warned the country of the impending event; but his warnings were not heeded.

Mr. Clay was nominated; and Mr. Webster, as he had done before, lent his influence in favor of the nominee of the Whig party. Mr. Polk was elected, and through his administration Mr. Webster was again in the Senate—his last term. The party to which he belonged was in the minority; but, though contending for principles, they did nothing in a factious spirit. Mr. Webster was opposed to the Mexican war, and opposed to the treaty by which it was closed; opposed, as he declared, on the ground that the new territory acquired would be an embarrassment, disturb the equilibrium of representation, and destroy the just relation between the Senate and the House, by bringing in new States with sparse populations, each with its two Senators, without such a number of Representatives as would bear a due proportion to the new members of the other Houses. On the subject of slavery, while he adhered to the principles of the Constitution, which forbid interference of the General Government with slavery

in the original States, he protested against its extension : " I have made up my mind, for one, that under no circumstances will I consent to the further extension of the area of slavery in the United States, or to the further increase of slave representation in the House of Representatives." These sentiments Mr. Webster maintained, and frequently repeated, and in accordance with these he shaped his actions, while he defended the "Compromise Measures." Different men, of different views, look upon his course according to their own ideas of his consistency or inconsistency. This is not the place to argue the question ; but we must concede that the man who lost no occasion to repeat his objections to the annexation of Texas, to the Mexican war, and to any increase of the slave area, could not be so weak as to expect that his advocacy of the "Compromise" would be a successful bid for the nomination as President. We must acquit him of any such motive ; and, however opinions may differ as to the wisdom or right of his course, his patriotism, sincerity, and devotion to the whole country, cannot be impugned.

During this Senatorial term, Mr. Webster was called upon to speak the obituary of his distinguished friend and opponent, Calhoun, and of

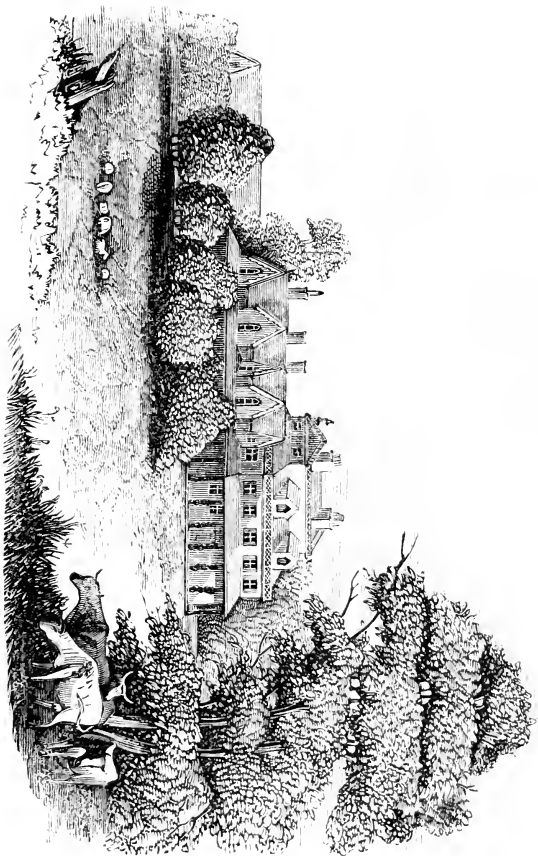
General Taylor, President of the United States. His son Edward, a major in the Massachusetts Volunteers, died in Mexico, in January, 1848, and his daughter, Julia Webster Appleton, in April of the same year. These bereavements greatly afflicted him, and, with his increasing age, gave a deeper shade of pensive sternness to his face, and strengthened the religious tone of his character.

Upon the accession of Mr. Fillmore to the Presidency, by the death of General Taylor, Mr. Webster was called again to the post of Secretary of State. In this second term of his service in that important office, Mr. Webster chiefly distinguished himself by his reply to the Austrian Chargé, Chevalier Hulseman. In that document, Mr. Webster defined and defended the American policy towards Hungary. Its manly tone makes the American heart bound with natural pride, and true men every where respond to its noble doctrines. In his intercourse with Kossuth, the Hungarian exile, Mr. Webster showed that he had not forgotten the sentiments which he had uttered years before upon the Greek question. Without committing the government of which he was a member, the aged statesman made his sympathies evident with all the fire of youth.

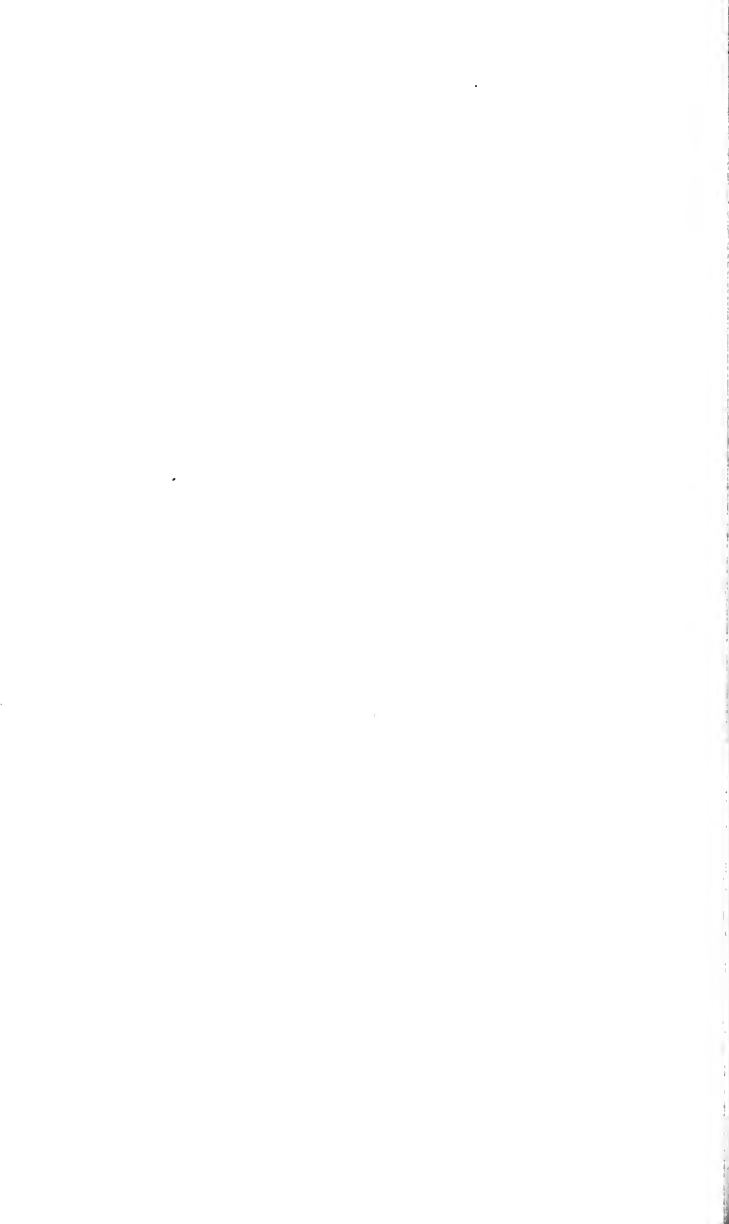
CHAPTER XIII.

Elms Farm—Marshfield—Close of Mr. Webster's Life—His Illness and Death—His Burial—His Will—Religious Opinions—Conclusion.

“ELMS FARM” is the name of the place in Franklin, New Hampshire, where Mr. Webster spent the greater part of his youth. It is about three miles distant from his birthplace, and, altogether, contains about nine hundred acres. It descended to Ezekiel and Daniel from their father, and was retained by the latter from filial affection. It is almost exclusively a grazing farm, and here Mr. Webster indulged his taste for the rearing of herds of the finest cattle. Upon this farm he had a tenant, or yeoman, whose name is John Taylor. Hither he was wont annually to repair, to refresh himself amid the scenes of his youth, and visit the graves of “the dear kindred blood” whom he loved so well. The scenery is romantic, and every part of it is sacred to the early associations of the



MARSHFIELD, THE RESIDENCE OF MR. WEBSTER.



subject of our memoir. The most elevated spot upon it has a touch of the Puritan character of the family, in the name which it bears—"Pisgah's Top." At this point the view is magnificent, and from this spot Mr. Webster was wont, at his annual visits, to survey the scenes of his youth. The last visit which he paid to this place was in 1851. While there, some twenty men were engaged in making hay, and the aged statesman, then in his 70th year, declared that "he could pitch more hay in an hour than any man in the crowd," and throwing aside his coat, he showed that the dexterity of his youth had not forsaken him.

Agriculture was a passion with Daniel Webster. But the chief of his science and experience he exhibited on the estate in Marshfield. About the year 1826, Mr. Webster's attention was first called to the vicinity, on account of its opportunities for open air, exercise, and amusement, of which he was always fond. Successive visits attached him to the spot; and he made the first purchase of land there in 1827, buying the house at which he had visited, with about one hundred and fifty acres of land. By the purchase of tract after tract, Mr. Webster swelled his domain to about two thousand acres; for the possession of much

land seemed to be a passion with him; and at Marshfield, land could, twenty-five years ago, be bought at very low prices. Under his culture, the quality of the soil was so much improved that its products were increased an hundred-fold. While he advanced the profitable character of his territory, he added, by art, to its natural features. By his own hand, or under his immediate direction, over a hundred thousand ornamental and forest trees were planted; and these were so disposed as to beautify the landscape, and present, at every turn, some harmonious or unexpected feature. Of fruit-trees, he also planted thousands of the best varieties which the soil and climate would support. The whole farm is so intersected with roads and avenues, walks and pathways, that, without interfering with its utility, the place appears like an extensive pleasure-ground. Ride or walk in what direction you choose, and everywhere is visible the evidence of care and culture. The natural features of Marshfield are improved by the art of landscape gardening, on a grand scale. Even the lakes, of which there are three near the house, Mr. Webster managed to make more beautiful by art. The larger one he colonised with wild geese, by constructing in it artificial islands,

like the chosen haunts of the bird in its freedom. Every possible variety of poultry is included among the stock of the place. As to cattle, the raising of which was his favorite agricultural amusement, he had hundreds of the choicest stock; and even a few South American lamas added variety to his assortment.

Mr. Webster was no "exclusive" improver. Many who have a passion for such things, have a pride, also, in keeping their choice varieties to themselves. He had none of this small vanity; but scattered with a liberal hand among his neighbors, the benefits of his experience, and the advantages of his improvements. At Marshfield, his tenant, or superintendent, was Mr. Porter Wright; his fisherman, Mr. Seth Peterson. The latter was no unimportant personage; holding the same post of honor that the huntsman held in the olden time. Mr. Webster was not only admired, but beloved by his neighbors and townsmen; and the feeling of the void that his loss created, was well expressed by one of them, who said, when he was laid in his grave, "How lonesome the world seems!"

The main part of Mr. Webster's mansion at Marshfield, was built in 1774. By his additions,

and the improvements which he made upon the original building, it was doubled in size, and rendered perfect in convenience. The whole house is furnished in admirable taste; but the large Gothic library, filled with choice books, was the chief feature. This collection did not include his law library, which is in Boston; nor his agricultural works, which were in a separate building. The library was built and furnished after designs drawn by his daughter Julia; and is in harmony with her father's character, and the purpose for which it was erected. The house is full of choice objects of art, portraits and busts of himself and of his distinguished friends, and his relatives; and many of the masterpieces of ancient and modern art.

When Mr. Webster first came to reside at Marshfield, it was as a widower. To the lady who survives him, he was married in 1832. She was the life of his Marshfield home; and, with his children, shared his warm affections. Except Fletcher, who survives, all his children preceded him to the grave. The six volumes of his works are dedicated to the children of his brother Ezekiel, to his sons Edward and Fletcher, to his daughter Julia, to his friends, Isaac P. Davis and

J. W. Paige, and to Caroline Le Roy Webster, his “dearly-beloved wife,” as “a tribute of his affection, and some acknowledgment of the deep interest which she had taken” in the productions of his intellect.

To Marshfield, endeared to him by every consideration which can make an earthly possession valuable, Daniel Webster, in 1852, retired to die. We cannot better describe the close of his life, than in the eloquent words of Hon. Rufus Choate : “In the last months of his life, the whole affectionateness of his nature, his consideration of others, his gentleness, his desire to make them happy, and to see them happy, seemed to come out in more and more beautiful and habitual expression than ever before. The long days’ public tasks were felt to be done — the cares, the uncertainties, the mental conflicts of high place, were ended, and he came home to recover himself for the few years which he might still expect would be his before he should go hence to be here no more : and there, I am assured, and fully believe, no unbecoming regrets pursued him ; no discontent, as for injustice suffered, or expectations unfulfilled ; no self-reproach for anything done, or anything omitted, by himself ; no irritation, no

peevishness unworthy of his noble nature; but instead, love and hope for his country, when she became the subject of conversation, and for all around him, the dearest and the most indifferent; for all breathing things about him the overflow constant growing in gentleness and benevolence of the kindest heart, parental, patriarchal affections, seeming to become more natural, warm, and communicative. Softer and yet brighter grew the tints on the sky of parting day, and the last lingering rays, more even than the glories of noon, announced how divine was the source from which they proceeded, how incapable to be quenched, how certain to rise on a morning which no night should follow."

On the morning of Sunday, October 24th, 1852, Daniel Webster passed away. He had lived out the appointed term; having, at the time of his decease, nearly completed his seventy-first year. While riding, in the spring preceding his death, he was thrown from his carriage by the breaking of a bolt, and from this injury it is supposed he never fully recovered. The immediate cause of his death was a disease of the liver, ending in a hemorrhage consequent upon his malady. For some time before his death, the papers contained

contradictory reports; all indicating, however, to those who remembered the age he had reached, his approaching end. When it was announced by authority of his family, that his name, which had been used in the pending political canvass, must be disconnected from that subject, the public were prepared for the melancholy intelligence which soon followed.

When Mr. Webster could no longer ride or walk about, he still continued to exhibit an affectionate interest in his dependents, as well as in his family. Even the noble cattle which he had reared he caused to be driven up to the door of the mansion, that he might look at their fair proportions, and gratify the passion which he had always possessed for agricultural pursuits. From his window he surveyed the ocean, and caused a light to be hung at the mast-head of his favorite yacht, that he might observe in the darkness that it was still there. His conversation had turned often, through his life, upon religious themes, and in his last days they were frequently introduced by him. Yet he remembered and attended to the details of his farm, and to his family disbursements, and spoke understandingly upon the concerns of State. He caused memorials to be prepared and presented to

his friends, and in very many particulars exhibited the possession of a full knowledge and interest in the subjects which had been the occupation of his leisure, or of his hours of labor. He caused the pay-roll of his farm and household servants to be made up and cancelled. Yet in all this there was not so much a clinging to earth, as another and better motive—a thoughtful, curious, anxious train of reflection, which was exhibited in his last words.

On the Thursday preceding his death, he gave directions to his men upon the farm relative to their daily progress, and received his mail, directing the answers to many of the letters. His last autograph letter was directed to the President of the United States. On this day, also, he executed his will, and completed various other matters of business which he thought it necessary should be attended to. In this will, he devised the Marshfield property to his son, Fletcher, to be held by trustees, and secured to his grandson, Daniel Webster. He made affectionate provision for his widow, even to the designation of her tomb by his side at Marshfield; the two being exactly of the same size and form. Many of his friends are remembered kindly in his will, and all persons men-

tioned are spoken of with respect and affection, even to the four colored servants, whom he had purchased and manumitted; all, he declares, "well-deserving," and upon none of them is a demand to be made for any portion of their purchase-money.

On Tuesday, he remained nearly all day in a state of unconsciousness, or of torpor, occasionally rallying. During this day, he presented his physician, Dr. Jeffries, with his watch, as a token of his regard for his unwearied attention to him during his illness. He said, "Doctor, you will feel the pulses of many patients by that watch; you will feel my pulse many times, yet, by it." The Doctor looked sad, and made no reply. Mr. Webster added, "You look gloomy, Doctor, but you need not be alarmed; I shall be with you to-morrow."

On Saturday afternoon, it was distinctly announced to him that his end was near. He received the intimation without emotion, and caused his wife and the other female members of his family to be called, to each of whom he spoke words of farewell and religious consolation. The male members of his family, including his farmers and servants, and the friends who were in the house, were next summoned. He addressed all by name,

and, referring to his past relations with them, took an affectionate leave of all. He enjoined Mr. Peter Harvey, and others, not to leave Marshfield till he was "a dead man." Then, having gone through with his duty to all around him, his thoughts reverted to himself, and he said, "On the 24th of October, all that is mortal of Daniel Webster will be no more!" He then prayed in his natural full, clear, and strong voice, ending with the petition, "Heavenly Father, forgive my sins, and receive me to thyself through Christ Jesus."

The subject of death had long been in his thoughts, not only as an event for which he must prepare, but also as a thing for examination and analysis. He appeared to be desirous to note every change, not only in his bodily condition, but in the alterations which would take place in his sentiments and emotions. For this reason, he tested, to the last, his capacity for business and detail, in order to observe how long the power of accustomed objects would continue to impress him; and undoubtedly he discovered, by the changes within himself, the fatal termination, before his physicians had lost their hope. It was a mental phenomenon which we hope to see

treated by those who had the best opportunity to observe it: the great mind of Daniel Webster, standing, as it were, aside and superior, and noting critically the struggle in himself between life and death. The following incident illustrates this: While lying in a half-dreamy state, apparently unconscious, except when addressed, of what was passing around him, the room still and solemn as the tomb, he suddenly broke forth, not in the low, weak voice of an invalid, but in accents as loud, clear, and thrilling, as ever echoed through the Senate Chamber, "Life! Life! Death! Death! *how curious it is!*" It pierced to the farthest apartment of the house, startling those who heard it, like the sound of a trumpet. Shrouded from the outer world, that vast mind was weighing the vaster themes, upon which its conclusions can never in this world be known.

A short time before his death, his head became cold. He feared that his consciousness or his reason would leave him. He said, "Life till death; I wish to retain my senses till I die." His son, standing by, said, "Father, you have your senses perfectly. Your conversation is rational." He then said, "Poetry—Gray." His words were few, from extreme exhaustion. His son repeated

two stanzas of Gray's Elegy. "That is poetry; all right," said he. He evidently wished to test his own mental condition. Finding that the well-known lines of the poet revived *the old emotions*, he was assured that reason was still on her throne. Hence his remark, "*All right still*, my son." He spoke of the difficulty of dying, and Dr. Jeffries repeated to him, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Mr. Webster instantly rejoined: "The fact! the fact! That is what I want! Thy rod! thy rod! Thy staff! thy staff!" He wished to know whether he was then actually passing the dark valley; that, with the full possession of his reason, he might note the instant of his departure. He sunk into unconsciousness for a time; and when he revived, his surprise, when he found himself still alive, was expressed in the exclamation, "I STILL LIVE!" They were the last words he uttered. An hour of perfect quiet succeeded; and at about two o'clock in the morning, he passed so quietly away, that it was difficult to fix the precise moment of his departure.

In every possible mode, the nation testified its

grief, and honored the memory of the departed. He was buried in an unostentatious manner, at Marshfield, without form or parade; the clergyman of his parish, Rev. Ebenezer Alden, conducting the services, at the request of the deceased. Eight or ten thousand persons were present at the obsequies; and of all these, it could truly be said that they were his "friends and neighbors." By such alone had he desired that his funeral should be attended.

HE STILL LIVES! Not only in his legal and political knowledge and services—or in the memory of his private loves and friendships—or in the various benefits in secular matters which he has conferred upon his country and his race: but he lives in this declaration of his faith, drawn up and signed by him a few days before his death:

"*Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*"—Philosophical argument, especially that drawn from the vastness of the Universe, in comparison with the insignificance of this globe, has sometimes shaken my reason for the faith which is in me; but my heart has always assured and re-assured me, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be a Divine Reality. The Sermon on the Mount

cannot be a merely human production. This belief enters into the very depth of my conscience. The whole history of man proves it.

“DANIEL WEBSTER.”

Daniel Webster was not a faultless man. We do not present him as such. But we have no need to draw from the past the infirmities of his character. Humanly estimated, they were far less than his virtues. The foundation of his eloquence was in his intimate acquaintance with the sublime language of the Bible; and his religious character and impressions gave Daniel Webster a moral dignity above all mere intellectual rank. He could introduce, as in the case of the heirs of the Girard Estate, a religious argument into a legal plea, and do no violence to his subject—he had the manly courage, even amid scoffers, to confess his faith. He could converse on religious subjects without affectation or awkwardness, showing that the source of his words was in his heart. He returned, at the last, to the love of his youth; and as his day waned, renewed the early vows with which he took upon himself the profession of his faith; but at no time was he a scoffer, or indifferent to religious ordinances. He

died in the communion of the Protestant Episcopal Church. We close our memoir of Daniel Webster with a word of eulogy from his friend J. Prescott Hall, of New York; and we commend it to our young readers, as indicating one mode in which all may imitate Daniel Webster:

“I have partaken of his innocent and manly amusements; I have walked with him alone, at twilight, upon the shore of the ‘far-resounding sea;’ I have seen him in the Forum, and in the Senate-chamber—his gigantic intellect towering above all his compeers; and *under no circumstances, and on no occasion, did I ever know him to forget his own dignity, or cease to impress, if not overwhelm, with the sense of his surpassing greatness. From his lips I never heard an irreverent, a profane, or an unseemly expression;* while his playful wit, his deep philosophy, his varied acquirements, and unrivalled powers of conversation, are among the richest treasures of my recollection.”

THE END.

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